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WILLARD STRAIGHT IN THE ORIENT

BY

LOUIS GRAVES

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MAJOR WILLARD STRAIGHT

WILLARD STRAIGHT IN THE ORIENT

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM HIS SKETCH-BOOKS

By

LOUIS GRAVES

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FOREWORD

One who had never been in the East could hardly have presumed to attempt this chronicle had it not been for the letters and diaries of Willard Straight and the generous help of men and women who were with him in China and Korea and Manchuria. These documents and the recollections of these friends are responsible, as the reader will promptly discover from the abundant quotations, for whatever of oriental atmosphere has been imparted to the narrative. The book is a work not so much of authorship as of selection and arrangement.

My own acquaintance with Willard Straight began about a year before the entrance of America into the world war, when I was associated with him in one of the citizens' movements for preparedness. All who came in close contact with him cherished for him both admiration and affection, and I was like the rest. Such an attachment naturally carried with it a lively interest in his career—a career which was known to have been charged with romance but which, one felt certain, held far more of the picturesque and exciting, of large vision, high idealism and tireless energy behind them, than had ever yet been told.

So, when there fell to me the opportunity to go deep into the records of this stirring life, I greeted that opportunity as a rare privilege. Letters, diaries and memoranda yielded detailed accounts of Straight's intercourse with all manner of men, high and low—mandarins, rickshaw coolies, admirals and generals, Buddhist priests, artists and newspaper correspondents, princes, cabinet ministers, diplomats, explorers, missionaries, engineers, railroad magnates, financiers. Old friends of his told me of talks they had had and trips they had made with him; of his negotiations with subtle Chinese officials and, sometimes, perhaps, still more subtle Europeans; of his tireless energy, his hopefulness and buoyancy, and his consideration for the humble and unfortunate. Of all this volume of reminiscence the sketch that follows is only a skimming.

For their aid to me in the preparation of the memoir I am particularly grateful to Mrs. Straight, Maurice Casenave, J. O. P. Bland, E. T. Williams, Robert H. Patchin, E. Carleton Baker, Louis D. Froelick, R. M. Collins, Mr. and Mrs. W. F. Spinney, Mr. and Mrs. T. J. N. Gattrell and Lewis Palen.

LOUIS GRAVES

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Chapter I

FIRST DAYS IN PEKING

A TALL, blond young man with an eager mind, a talent for drawing, and a lively taste for good company, was graduated from Cornell University in the year 1901. For all his love for the passing joys of life—gatherings of congenial spirits, music, plays, dancing, sport—he was ambitious. Yet he was in the uncomfortable position of not knowing where his ambition lay. Stirring within him was a restless urge, an impulse to hard work combined with revolt against the commonplace. He wanted the kind of success that other men wanted; but he was determined, without knowing how it was to be brought about, that the route to the goal should not lead over the monotonous plain of every day, but among unexpected hills and valleys of high adventure.

At college, Willard Straight had been one of a group of undergraduates who gathered fortnightly in the big book-lined, smoke-filled study of Henry Morse Stephens, then professor of history. Morse Stephens, who came of a family of Anglo-Indians, exerted the strongest influence upon Straight at Cornell. The two came to associate on familiar terms like chums of the same age. Professor Stephens was steeped in Asian lore and tradition. One of his hobbies was Kipling, and they used to read Kipling together and thence drift into talk of the East.

In Straight's senior year, President Schurman received a letter from Sir Robert Hart, inspector-general of the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs, asking him to select three students for entrance into the service. He passed on the request to Professor Stephens, whose first choice was Straight. Much as the offer tempted him, Straight hesitated, because he had planned to be an architect and he feared that if he turned from that purpose he might disappoint his foster parents, who had sacrificed much for him.

Both his parents had been teachers; more than that, scholars, eager for new ideas and able to pass them on to others with added vitality. His father, Henry H. Straight, was first a devotee of languages and a teacher of Latin and Greek. But he turned to science and, as a pupil of Agassiz, received the inspiration that guided him through life. Willard Straight's mother was temperamentally an artist. She loved poetry, pictures—beauty in all its forms—above all else, people. While she and her husband were both members of the faculty of the Normal School at Oswego, New York, Willard, their only son, was born, on January 31, 1880. In the spring of 1887, shortly after the death of his father, his mother took Willard and his sister to Tokyo, where she became the head of a department in the Girls' Normal School. In two years she returned to America, in broken health, and died. The two children were taken in charge by Dr. Elvire Ranier and Miss Laura R. Newkirk of Oswego, who had been friends of their parents.

After consulting them about the call from the East, Straight decided to go. Thus he embarked upon the career that was to reveal to him the complex spirit of the East as it has been revealed to few men. He was to see at close quarters in Peking the cauldron of foreign intrigue; to have a part in the most bizarre and fascinating social life to be found in any of the world's capitals; to go to the Russo-Japanese War as a newspaper correspondent and to Manchuria as the first American consul general. And finally, he was to be distinguished as the leading advocate of American activity in the East. He died in France at the end of the Great War, before he was forty years old.

He was twenty-nine when he was appointed representative of the American group of bankers associated with the British, French and German groups in working out a plan for loans to China. His creative imagination was directed toward bringing about American participation in a plan that would apply foreign capital to China and at the same time make China a favored partner in her own development and not a victim of foreign spheres of influence. He did not live to see his vision realized, but the Consortium of the United States, Great Britain, France and Japan, recently concluded by Thomas W. Lamont for financing and stabilizing China and perhaps thereby forestalling war in the Far East—is the fulfilment of the conception he spent the best effort of his life in developing. Those tedious loan negotiations of 1909, 1910 and 1911, in which Straight took so prominent a part as the spokesman of American policy, years before statesmen had talked seriously of a league of nations, pointed the way to true international coöperation.

But the Willard Straight who sailed for the Far East in November of 1901 foresaw none of this. He was a healthy, normal American youth with healthy, normal tastes—blithe, frank, companionable. And the Asia whither he was bound was not that of concession hunters; it was the Asia of romance.

In January, 1902, he arrived in China. The Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs Service was then at the height of its prestige. It had been devised and developed and was now ruled, to the last detail, by Sir Robert Hart, who bore the title of Inspector General. A British subject, Sir Robert high-handedly declined to permit the British Government to direct his policy. Under this benevolent despot, the service was operated for and on behalf of China, with an international personnel.

Straight's first duty was to learn the language at Nanking, where, in an atmosphere free from distracting foreign associations, the neophytes in the Customs Service—one Austrian, two Frenchmen, two Englishmen, besides Straight—could devote themselves to mastering the Chinese tongue. "The students' mess of the Chinese Customs studies and rides and swears as it jolly well pleases," wrote Straight. But there was a lot of hard work. Every morning the native teacher came, wreathed in smiles and heartily shaking his own hands. "The morning work drags on—" wrote the pupil, "the teacher sighing now and then when one says *chan* for *shan* or uses

an even tone instead of a rising or a falling one. He smokes innumerable cigarettes, at the expense of the student, and drinks great quantities of tea—or whiskey if the pupil is at all 'easy'. He asks questions about your father and mother and sisters and brothers and if he can't make himself understood will go to the dictionary and point out the characters. Any photographs of pretty girls that you may happen to have about as mementos of bygone days, he will scan eagerly and inquire about their history, past, present and future, and ask which one is your wife. You in the meantime are learning Chinese, or trying to."

In the afternoon another teacher came; for it was a rule that each student should have two instructors as a precaution against any one mannerism of speech. First came speaking, then reading and, lastly, writing, in the same order, day after day. To the morning and afternoon sessions under native guidance, the more ambitious men added an hour or two of evening study by themselves.

"Were one to work eight hours a day at any ordinary and respectable language," Straight wrote in his diary, "the end of six months would show some appreciable progress. Not so Chinese. Half a year is but the thin edge of the wedge.

"The work is very hard and very confining. I am first put to learning the 'Radicals', a group of 219 characters, which are used as the basis of the language. I must commit them to memory. Then I must practice the tones. I must spend an hour or two a day in going over and over a series of rising and falling, stretched-out and clipped-off monosyllables, which the teacher drones out to be imitated as nearly as possible. Anyone dropping in at the Customs College would think himself in an asylum of particularly hopeless lunatics, so great is the hubbub and the barking of strange, unearthly noises."

A MONGOL LAMA

Off duty, Straight began to cultivate the acquaintance of Chinese priests and officials and merchants. He practiced his ear and tongue in talking with them and drew from them, at the same time, their ideas on education and government, their opinion of foreigners, and stories of their families and their business affairs. He haunted the shops and bargained with the shopkeepers; he walked in the villages and learned the ways of the farmers. Thus, here in Nanking, he was already acquiring, by the most direct and sympathetic methods, an intimate knowledge of the Chinese; and he was not only learning to respect them but was winning their admiration at the same time. It was through his obvious frankness, his genuine regard for them, his treatment of them as equals, that he made friends of Chinese as he made friends of Americans and British and French.

"The commonly accepted idea of a Chinaman may be that he is a phlegmatic and rather sober-sided sort of person," he wrote in his diary soon after his arrival. "Such, however, is not the case, as anyone who has watched him on his holidays will know. Whether the Dragon Feast, the second largest festival of the year, turns out to be a splendid pageant or a tawdry imitation depends entirely on the generosity of the local merchants. But even if the spectacle itself be small, the crowds are as interested and excited as if it were Barnum's Greatest Show on Earth.

"Through the northern part of the great walled enclosure, in the heart of the city proper, there runs a small canal and on this the dragon boats raced to and fro. At the bow of an ordinary sampan a dragon's head had been constructed, a dreadful thing of glaring red and green, glittering with gold and silver and tinsel joss paper. In the bow was the cox'n, holding two small red flags which he waved frantically as he timed the stroke of his crew, who were urged on by the banging of cymbals in the stern. The men were all half-naked, their queues wound around their shaven heads, and they wielded short paddles.

"On either side, the tea-shops and the verandas of private houses were full of holiday folk. Great strings of fire-crackers hung suspended from the balconies and banged and popped and fizzled away as they dropped in the water below. Save for the open course in the middle, the stream was alive with craft; little boats for the poorer classes, barges, lavishly decorated and carved, for the opulent—nabobs, clad in purple and white and green robes, who sat fanning themselves and drinking tea or gambling and gazing impudently at the crowds of painted women in the balconies above.

"Opposite the Fu-tze Miao, a huge, red-walled temple, the crowd was at its best. Peep-show men yelled out the attraction of their evil pictures. Candy peddlers cried their wares. Beneath an awning was a book-shop with the Chinese counterpart of our penny-dreadful novels. Crowding the literary man was a peddler, the dirty grease standing in his black kettles as he concocted fritters

of various kinds for the passing crowd. Hard by was a Taoist priest telling fortunes by drawing sticks from a jar—farther on a vender of cheap cigarettes in American boxes. Then came the story-teller's booth, with the cheerful liar sitting at a table, fanning himself, gesticulating, winking, smiling, ogling. Fakirs are the same the world over. Worldly-wise, clever, brazen-faced, he yarned on and on, and the gaping crowd sat around on benches and listened.

"Such was the Dragon Feast, a poor thing as far as the dragons were concerned, but a wonderful mêlée of humanity—merrymakers all, like a circus crowd, drunk and sober, strenuously pursuing the wily god of pleasure, bent on catching him if they sweated themselves to death in the effort."

Full as his hours were, Straight found time for drawing and painting as well as for keeping the vividly detailed journal of his daily experiences. When he went through the streets of Nanking or visited temples or traveled up or down the Yangtze in a native river-boat, he made pictures of his native acquaintances as he laughed and chatted with them. His water-colors and sketches even of that early period are of people, not things, done with the sympathetic insight he was gaining from personal association. The aged and dried-up lamas whom he found about temples interested him perhaps more than any other characters among the Chinese. He was extremely sensitive to the atmosphere that surrounded the religion of the Chinese and he delighted in roaming through the temples, staring at the images and altars, seeking to work out the meaning of inscriptions and listening to his guides tell legends of the old China that no white man ever trod. With his admiration, his reverence for aged things, was always curiously mingled an ultra-modern, whimsical mood. In the midst of a serious account of his rambles in Taoist and Buddhist monasteries, for instance, he pauses to describe—with evident pleasure in its grotesqueness—"a gilded wooden Buddha with white horse-hair beard, sitting stolidly on a blue cow—a most disreputable-looking cow showing its teeth in a fascinating grin and turning its head as if it would like to devour its lord and master."

All this time, although he was unaware of it, he was being watched by the old man in the headquarters of the Imperial Maritime Customs Service in Peking. For it was part of Sir Robert's creed to keep track of the new men introduced into the Service. Always he had his special uses for exceptional talent, and his subordinates sent to him regular reports on the progress of the students at Nanking. In the spring an examination was held. In all branches of the language Straight stood first. As he wandered about among the people, talking with them in temple courtyard, mud-walled village and dusty street-shop, he had been acquiring facility in speaking. But first rank in reading and writing surprised him, since he had slighted these subjects for conversation with the folk of street and countryside. The excellence of his performance won him the distinction of a transfer to Peking, the most sought-after assignment in the Service. When he called at headquarters, Sir Robert encouraged him to talk, all the while looking him over keenly, and promptly appointed him one of his personal aides.

RIVER COOLIE

For the next two years, Willard Straight was an intimate of Sir Robert's household. He became an active participant in the social life of the diplomatic circle—Sir Robert was the leader of the foreign colony in Peking—and was an interested observer of the moves and counter-moves in the game of intrigue that was to reach a climax in the Russo-Japanese War.

To a spirited youth with a fondness for art, no place in all the world could have been more fascinating than the Peking of the first years of this century. When Willard Straight came there in the spring of 1902, the Boxer uprising was past, and the foreign population, protected by an international military force, was quite safe. The siege of the legations was a memory, but a vivid one. There was no actual danger; yet there was the zestful sense of living on the perilous edge of civilization.

Two worlds mixed there. In the heart of the Tartar city dwelt the foreign colony, its few thousands but a handful among the multitude of Chinese. It was made up of eight contingents of legation guards, banking and merchant folk, missionaries, holders and would-be holders of concessions, newspaper correspondents, and, topping them all, the diplomatic set and the official family of the Inspector-General of the Imperial Maritime Customs.

It was a brilliant, cosmopolitan circle, gay and sparkling on the surface, not without its element of sincerity and high endeavor, yet concealing powerful currents of artifice and intrigue. Diplomats ate and drank together, paid compliments to one another with bows and smiles—and

MONGOLIAN CAMELS

THE CHEERFUL LIAR

then withdrew to their secret chambers to receive reports from spying subordinates, and form new plans for outdoing one another in the game of despoiling China. Already—as a few, though only a few, realized then—the coil was being wound which was to spring loose two years later and set at war Japan and Russia, the two chief players in this deadly game.

Straight, "student interpreter", fresh from provincial Nanking, was too intelligent not to see that big forces were at grips underneath the surface of foreign life in Peking. And he never let slip a chance to speculate upon the meaning of the hidden activity. But it takes a little time, even for the most engaging of men, to be let in as a close observer of the diplomatic conflict.

"It was at one of the garden parties that Sir Robert Hart gave every Wednesday to the diplomatic circle," writes Maurice Casenave, in 1902 the French *chargé d'affaires* at Peking, telling of his first meeting with Straight, "that I saw a blond young man come in, very tall, very slight, and very much at his ease—a happy, good-looking fellow whose fresh color lent a particularly attractive quality to his face and distinguished him from men who had lived some time in China and taken on the Chinese hue. He was dressed entirely in brown, with a big brown sombrero. Sir Robert introduced him to me, saying, 'This is my private secretary.'

"Then I talked with him, and he told me of his studies in Nanking and how he had been transferred to the capital to take up his new duties. Only those who know the China of that period will understand how rare an honor it was to have been called into such personal relations with his chief. For Sir Robert was noted for being a splendid judge of men, and when he had to select a private secretary he combed the Service for the keenest mind and the most forceful personality."

For his staff Sir Robert claimed, and to it was accorded, the official and social status of a diplomatic service. Indeed, the standing of the Imperial Maritime Customs Service was higher, actually, if not technically, than that of a legation; for its distinctive record of service, its aloofness from international squabbles, its unique position as a powerful partner of the Imperial Court, gave it a dignity all its own. So Sir Robert's dinners and dances and garden-parties were the main events of the social season.

Straight's comment upon him is on record in this brief form: "Sir Robert Hart, quaint, shy, powerful; a despot, fond of children and of ladies; silent and doing unexpected things. Above all, a tremendous worker."

The Customs establishment, including the Inspector General's own residence, was on the side of the Legation Quarter nearest the Forbidden City. Here, in what was known as the Junior Mess, in an old, low-lying Chinese building, Straight lived. For companions he had Kurosawa, a Japanese; Konowalof, a Russian; Maas, a Hollander; and Prince Rospigliosi, an Italian. This mingling of nationalities endowed their intercourse with a never-ending variety—each of them was to the others an unknown mental and spiritual land. Not always did they rub each other the right way; but, for the most part, peace reigned in the Junior Mess. They went to other people's parties, and they gave many a jolly party themselves. When they entertained in mild weather, the table was laid in the courtyard. After dinner in the balmy night air the company sat in bamboo chairs, sipping coffee and smoking; and then they sang while Straight, still wearing the light-hearted air of the college student, thrummed joyously on his guitar. Then in the temple terraces of the Western Hills beyond the city wall of Peking—summer homes of the Americans and other members of the legations—there were evenings of carefree song to the music of Straight's guitar under the stars of the oriental night. Often he sang songs of his own composition—settings he had made for poems of Kipling. He had in him something of the gay spirit of the "Tramp Royal", who had traveled "the 'appy roads that take you o'er the world", and of "The Long Trail", that high-hearted song of youth and love and voyaging through tropic seas.

There were nights at the American Legation Quarters or the Junior Customs Mess, when the whole distinguished set of European and Asian and American diplomats sat with astonished interest listening to Straight and Robert Haskins and other young Americans reel off the close harmony and "barber-shop swipes" of American college quartettes and coon songs that reeked with the lilt and drone of the South—banjo and minstrel shows—things quite new to the heirs of Old-World culture and soon amazingly popular in this cosmopolitan center of the Orient. Hostesses striving to banish ennui from formal dinner parties looked upon Straight as a guest much to be desired. But underneath the gaiety of these Peking dinners where the

A YOUNG PRIEST

SIR ROBERT HART

affairs of every great foreign office and court of Europe were canvassed, Straight was absorbing knowledge of the diplomatic game. To no one were his social gifts more pleasing than to Sir Robert Hart. For Sir Robert wanted his parties to be no less successful than his Customs. As soon as he heard of the talents of his new secretary, he invited him to dinner. The young man, a little awed, was anything but frolicsome.

"Now, look here, Straight," said Sir Robert, "you're not yourself, now, are you? If I weren't here, shouldn't you act differently? I've heard you are very amusing and I'm waiting to see it."

One can imagine with just how much humor and gaiety the secretary responded to such a suggestion. It reduced him to muteness. But he made a quick recovery and thereafter he was rarely absent when the I. G., as they all called the Inspector General, had guests. His host received several shocks from the way in which the American trod precedent under foot in his entertaining. One of the most famous institutions in China was the "squeeze" —meaning "graft"—levied by officials upon those who did business with the government. Famous as it was, however, it was distinctly against the etiquette of the Customs staff to talk of it publicly or even semi-publicly.

In one of the burnt-cork shows arranged by himself and other youngsters among the Americans, Straight shamelessly coupled the names of well-known mandarins with the "squeeze". Not only that, but he dared to introduce lines dealing in a spirit of levity with His Imperial Majesty, Kuang Hsu. Some who were spectators that night have declared that Sir Robert's hair stood on end with horror. It was fully expected in the foreign colony that there would be a vacant place on the staff next day. But the I. G. evidently forgave his youthful favorite everything.

Ardently as Straight shared in the life of the foreign colony, he never took his social activities too seriously. He was always laughing in his sleeve a little at the busy whirl and at his own part in it.

"Peking is a place of many dinners," he observed. "Not the ordinary dinners that one eats daily, with a clear conscience and a good digestion, but formal dinners that are haunted by visions of liver and dyspepsia as one goes through dish after dish and wine after wine. There are diplomatic dinners, where legations try to even off scores with each other; there are mess dinners given by officers and by the Customs staff; then there are awful affairs, given by misguided hostesses, where the guests are all mixed, where no one cares for his neighbor, and where, after the meal is finished, everybody adjourns to the parlor and sits in a circle. 'Oh, Mr. Jones, I know you play,' says the hostess, and Jones replies, 'Not at all, not at all,' wondering all the while which of his time-worn selections he will inflict upon us."

Not all dinner parties were like these. There were choice gatherings of men and women who had made their mark by force of will and wit and charm, where keen minds collided and struck fire from one another. But, of all dinners, he recalled with most satisfaction "the home-like little gatherings in the American barracks, where the officers' wives have a few well-selected people in for dinner, and music afterwards."

At one of Sir Robert's regular Monday night dances he met Lun P'ei Tzu, nephew of the Emperor, "a quiet little round-faced man, plainly dressed in dark silks with never a bit of embroidery or suggestion even of the gorgeous raiment of the celestial court. He was modesty itself, yet watched, as if he had seen them all his life, what must have been to him the ludicrous gambols of the dancers. None of the many strange things he saw seemed to affect him in the least. He even put sugar and cream in his tea like the others, which for a Chinaman must have been almost a sacrilege."

The I. G. surprised Straight after dinner by abruptly bidding him bring his drawings to show to the royal guest, "overjoying me, of course, with the opportunity to 'show off' a bit. Konowalof displayed the various drawings to the Emperor's nephew and explained them to him in far better Chinese than I could have hoped to summon. Then Sir Robert came in, and we must go over them all again. Sir Robert pointed out those he particularly liked. The Prince being most genial, I asked him to do me the honor to accept one of my pictures, and he chose a water-color of the Lama Temple."

Straight did not distinguish himself in outdoor sports but he was always fascinated by them. The enthusiasm he was to show for polo in later years on Long Island was already in evidence in his early days in China, and his enjoyment of tennis and skating was keen.

"Over at the Club rink last night to see 1902 fade out," he wrote of a New Year's Eve carnival. "Everything gay. Lanterns hanging from the shed lighted the smooth ice. The merrymakers, international as usual, were swinging round and round the circle, with the incapables shivering in the immediate vicinity of the seats and uprights. Music was furnished by the German band—that is, between the band's drinks, which were long ones. Flags of all nations were draped around the sides of the enclosure.

A LITTLE COUNTRY GIRL

A CAMEL-DRIVER

Diplomats, bank folk, officers and missionaries—in moderate quantities—glided or pitched or tumbled along, as the case might be.

"The Russians were the best skaters. Just before midnight lanterns and bells were given to everybody. Then, as midnight struck, the bugle sounded a long blast, the drums rattled and banged, hats came off and shouts rent the air. With the waltz that followed we all skated on, swinging the lanterns, jingling the bells, crying Happy New Year to friends.

"So it went for a while, and then came a supper given by Lady Susan. The famous pianist, Mademoiselle Ph—famous as she is, I can't spell her name—was there. There were toasts in all languages, by Lady Susan in Chinese and English and almost anything else, by DePlançon in French and English, by Bakroff and Campbell in Russian, by Rospigliosi in Italian, by myself in American. After much scattered hilarity we sang 'Auld Lang Syne' and dispersed."

Now and then, as one goes out of a stuffy house to get a breath of fresh air, Straight would turn his back upon the ceaseless stir and hum of the city, and lose himself within a deserted temple, or penetrate into some grove that he had not yet explored, or walk out into the country beyond the walls. It was at such times that the artist in him took full possession.

"The rustling of the trees overhead, the droning chant of the priest"—he is writing of the temple, the Pi Yun Sze—"the wind-borne chattering and the occasional howling of a dog, the clack-clack of the watchman's rattle—this is all. There is a great peace, a seclusion; life, like the flower-scented, wine-laden air, is sweet, full of portent.

"The little old priest, soft-eyed, meek, low-voiced, walks to and fro with bowed head. And such a rare smile he has! A smile that I would give all I have to be able to paint—a smile benignant, breathing self-denial, self-control, patience. If I could only put that on canvas, the embodiment of the sweet faith that came from India so many hundred years ago!

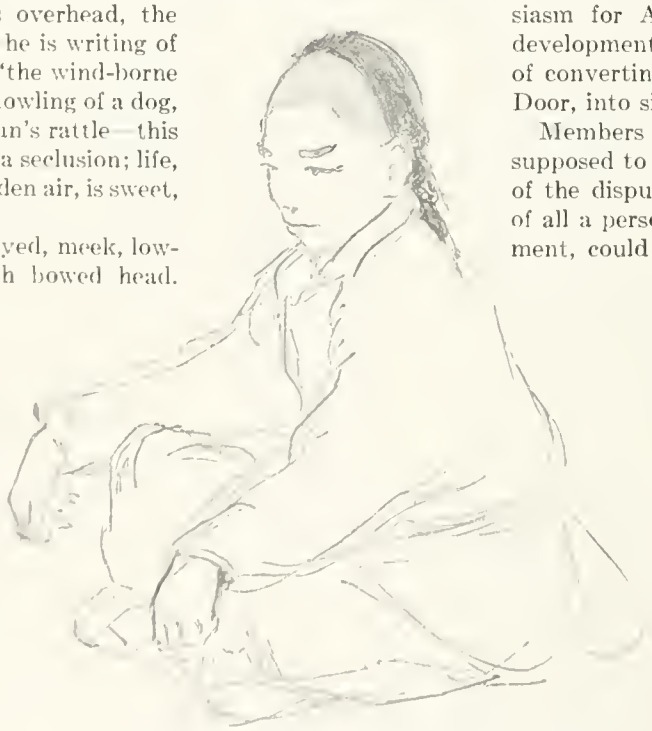
"In the evening I sat out on the slip with the old priest, smoking and watching the moon, half hidden by the clouds, that gave just enough light to sift through the leaves and throw a lace-like shadow on the pavement.

"The old fellow told me how, when the Boxer trouble began, the country folk had come to him and asked him what to do, and he told them not to go, but to trust to the great Buddha and the Emperor, who should know that it was written to live and let live and not kill men. But they wouldn't listen to him. Then, after the fighting was over, his temple was rifled by brawling soldiery, looted and defiled. Afterwards the crops went to waste. For there was no one to till the fields and the Emperor could no longer aid them and there was much suffering in the temple. Then it was that his hair turned gray and his eyes were dimmed."

THE UBIQUITOUS OIL TIN

It was not long after his arrival in Peking that Straight's thoughts began to take a more serious turn. He did not desert his gaieties; he continued to like them as much as ever. But, as the older and more experienced men in the Legation Quarter became aware of his solid and discreet intelligence and began to accept him as a friend and confidant, he developed an intense interest in the eastern aspects of international relations. Intimate association with these men kindled in him enthusiasm for American participation in the development of China as the surest means of converting the empty phrase, the Open Door, into significant fact.

Members of the Customs Service were supposed to be neutral. But, in the midst of the disputes then raging, nobody, least of all a person of Straight's vivid temperament, could live up to the rule. At that time, the friends of China looked upon Japan as its champion. It was Japan that was going to stop the Czar's steam-roller and save the most ancient of empires from an inglorious partition. Such a hope may appear humorous now, in the light of the way in which Japan has since played so enterprisingly the rôle of Wolf to China's Little Red Riding Hood; but it was cherished then by wise and well-informed observers. Straight was one of those who shared it.



A COUNTRY BOY

A BUDDHIST ACOLYTE

The American colony in Peking, grouped around the Legation, shunned the scheming diplomacy by which most of the other nations were seeking to maneuver themselves into a position of advantage in China. But Straight mingled with Europeans as much as with Americans, and even a great deal with the Japanese, and soon he was in the very midst of the hotbed of diplomatic gossip. The high-handed behavior of many of the foreign legations in Peking and, more still, the evident design to inflict further injuries upon China in the future, made a deep impression upon him.

He learned, too, to see ourselves as others see us as he listened to men who had known China life for years, relate some of the disgraceful pages in American history in the East. "Dinner with J. O. P. Bland and Dr. Morrison," he wrote. "In going over I felt like a sort of a criminal, or the leader of a forlorn hope, to put it in a more pleasing guise. We went out along the glacis between the rows of blinking lights, past the rickshaw stands where the coolies were cuddled up in the bottom of their vehicles, rattling along over the dusty road to the bridge over the Imperial Canal. Here we were met by a man with a lantern, who guided us in behind the mat-shade of the street kitchens, along the stone coping to the water gate. Standing on a stone far below us, surrounded on all sides by stinking water was a man with a lantern and stretching up, the connecting link between us, was a ladder, gaunt, spindling, a most uninviting-looking mode of descent. He with the lantern went down first, we followed, and the light brightened a bit of the stagnant liquid about us, slime covered, black, inhabited by myriads of water creatures. Then we stepped charily over a little causeway of stones in between the hewn bars of the water gate and through the archway beyond. Once out of the tunnel we had to scramble over rough ground, which the wily Oriental had used for all sorts of household purposes. Up and down we went until we finally reached the dust padded roadway which we followed along to the alley where Dr. Morrison's house was located. The court-yards were gay with lanterns, which lighted the shrubbery and relieved them in silhouettes, or silvered their greenery.

"At dinner there was talk of the profession of Jezebel. My heart shrivelled within me as I heard tale after tale of the roguery of American officials in the East, of the bribery, of a consul and a group of missionaries—such things of Americans, of the great, the proud home of the Eagle! Such rotten corruption by the representatives of one's own native land was enough to make me wish for absolute despotism that the stable might be cleaned.

"Then on to the German Consul-General in Shanghai, made famous or infamous by Stevenson in his 'Footnote to History.' I saw the glance of race hatred glint for a moment between Bland, the Englishman, and Wilzer, the German. There were tales of loot and pillage, of the horrors of the siege, of the excesses of the armies of occupation. Bland was witty, sharp, keen, capable of following his point to the bitter end, and of searing in each sentence with an acidity that would make it felt. Wilzer was simple, a little dull, helpless in the hands of the man of the world, who, every whit as suave, had a much broader knowledge of men and affairs. The combat between the sheep and the leopard it was."

The dedication of the von Ketteler monument, erected by the Chinese under compulsion from Berlin in atonement for the murder of the German ambassador by a mob (and, it may be noted, razed by the Chinese during the European war), occasioned one of Straight's most outspoken protests.

"China is weighed down by taxation necessary to meet the enormous indemnities," he wrote. "The foreign soldiers swagger about the streets with the air of con-

IN THE RICE-SHOP

querors. Rapine and wholesale slaughter were loosed on the populace of Peking in consequence of the murder of von Ketteler, and now, to strike another blow at the pride of the Chinese, this triple-arched memorial is built in the heart of their city to stand as an eternal reminder of the white man's mailed fist."

The dedication led to still another of those embarrassing interviews with the I. G. For *Harper's Weekly*, Straight wrote an article about the ceremony. Through some mistake in the editorial offices, the line under the title read: "By Our Correspondent, Willard Straight, Inspector-General of Imperial Maritime Customs at Peking." When the *Weekly* arrived, he opened it with the expectant thrill of a budding author, but the first glance set his knees quaking. He spent a sleepless night and next morning went straight to Sir Robert with the exhibit. The I. G. read the heading and looked surprised.

"Well, I wish you luck in your new position," he said gravely. Straight waited, full of dread, while his chief read further into the article. "Rather a good yarn," Sir Robert said at last. "Better leave it with me, I'd like to finish it." And he concluded as Straight started out: "Don't bother your head about it. It was a foolish misprint; people will forget all about it in a week and nobody will be any the worse off."

Straight was sensitively alert to the beauty and the romance of the life of the Orient all about him and his interest now in the Mongols and their religious practices presaged an escapade of his somewhat later that brought him no little fame in the community. "After dinner Kornaloff took me in to see some bronzes, six pieces of excellent workmanship," he wrote. "One looked remarkably like McKinley. He told me of his trip to Mongolia where he saw a great affair with the living Buddha. This gentleman came to the great feast, mounted on a white pony, surrounded by yellow robed lamas and proceeded to the great temple, three men carrying them, one man blowing. While the Mongol princes and officials and high priests were feasting with Mr. Buddha, little boys stripped to the waist came up and after being sprinkled with holy water and blessed, they mounted ponies. When they were too small their legs were tied under them. They raced for fifteen miles on well-trained ponies, seven and a half to go and as much to come back. All the little boys were good for was to beat the horses and make them go the faster. Then on their return the winner was presented with a silken prayer handkerchief which in Mongolia passes for money and the house or clan of the winner felt assured that fortune will be theirs during the months to come. Then he told how he had met a Mongol crawling to Wu Tai-shan. An old dervish he was, with leather trousers and apron and wooden clogs in his hands. With these he could reach out and then, bringing himself up, stretch out again like the measuring worm. He had seen Buddhist priests who had started out to collect money for a certain cause, seen them walking along with a nail in their noses, which they would sell—the nail not the noses—for a few taels. Other men stayed in little huts, lived there for years with a bell hanging in front of them. For so much they would ring the bell. Others sitting in a nail-studded box would sell the nails for so much, the purchaser winning virtue by having taken away the nail from the poor creature's box and thus doing a kindness to him."

Those who knew Straight best have often dwelt upon the strife within him between the things that moved his hand and brain and the things that fed his spirit. His strongest impulse was for attainment for himself and for the benefit of those about him, and in early years he thought much of such attainment in terms of his esthetic joy in life. Conscious, as he could not fail to be, of his gift for affairs, abounding in energy, surrounded by tasks he felt impelled to undertake, he plunged into the whirl of finance. In the pressure of these new activities, as the years passed, the artistic impulse was checked. But he never lost his yearning to express, in some form of practical and preferably public life, his interest in people and art and his talent for originality of thought and well-applied action. At the time of his death, he was making plans to follow pursuits more readily responsive to the promptings of his spirit.

In those early days at Peking there was no fitting release for his energies. Hard work of some kind he had to have, to be satisfied, but here he found that his chief activity lay not in work at all, but in the social life of the I. G.'s household. His feeling that he was wasting precious time cast him into spells of "the blues", which are reflected in his diary.

"Altogether I am in a bad way," he wrote one night, in a low-spirited mood, "and don't know how to get out of it except by healthy exercise and seeing lots of people: but that means the neglect of Chinese and of art, so what can a poor fool do?"

In one of those philosophizing moods that he liked to indulge now and then—a sort of homily on success and failure—he wrote:

"There are so many ways in which one can explain failures. It is human nature to make mistakes, one assures himself; the world expects a young man to be less acquainted with its tricks, easier to befool, to be of less value in all positions requiring not only natural ability but years of training. The man who makes mistakes, errors of judgment, says: 'Others would have done the same, I am only human.' Yet within himself he feels that he is more clever than other men. He feels ill-used. In reality he has found his level. He has played for recognition as being more than an everyday man. He has made a mistake. This is no reflection on him—it only proves that he's an ordinary man. There are many such; the highways swarm with them.

"His chief has been looking for the exceptional man, and has found the rule. The young man is not expected to outdo his seniors. If he does, he makes his name—he proves his worth—he succeeds. If he doesn't, he is like the other men—responsibility will not be given to him; he must wait and grow into it. He is ordinary. To be better than you are expected to be, to be able to handle a situation by common sense in lieu of experience, to be able more than to hold the position in which you are placed, no matter how important it is—that is success. To do less means simply that you are like the rest. And that, to an ambitious man, means failure."

Again, he voiced his philosophy when he expressed admiration for a certain official in the Customs:

"He may not be smooth or politic, but he has the energy and intellect to move something. It is such men with such energies, not those who sit around and watch and criticize, who accomplish things in the world."

THE STRAIGHTS' GATE-KEEPER IN PEKING
Water-color by Willard Straight

ONE OF THE FOUR HUNDRED MILLION

Pastel by Willard Straight

SKETCHES FROM JAPAN AND MANCHURIA

Chapter II
A DIARY OF PEKING

An American Visitor in Peking—She, an American girl in a wilderness of foreign bachelors. About twenty-three, with an agreeable smile. The most noticeable thing about her, however, is her patronizing air, the obvious bestowal of her attentions on different people at different times, a smile here, a kindly inquiry full of doctored-up interest there, and a watchful eye for the effect upon the recipient of the favors. Yes, she had been in Europe, lived there and bought pictures in Venice. Blue went so well with gold. Sometimes the Venetians framed 'em in black, but she liked gold. The picture I had given Mrs. C— was so nice, and oh! the frame was so odd, you know. (Yes, I knew it—my servant had made it from cardboard and Chinese joss-paper.)

Two Men of the World—Dinner with Jameson and Coolidge. Altogether one of the most enjoyable of my Peking experiences. Such tales of men one has heard about and read about, from the lips of those who knew them! Jameson is charming as a man of the world, as a *raconteur*. Coolidge has been everywhere, done everything, seen everybody. Newspaper correspondents, authors, diplomatists, statesmen—all passed in review before my wondering eyes. Yarns of Savage Landor, of Li Hung-chang's household, of Yuan Shih-kai—Jameson in western China—Steever, the skull-hunter, and the dinner with the Tame Sultan of Lahore. Such was the conversation.

A Day in the Country—Today a riding picnic to Pa Pao Shan—the Hill of the Eight Treasures. A beautiful, bright, sunshiny day, with the breeze of October in the air, just enough to make one tingle a bit and to start the joy of living surging through one's body. There was a good ride out and a cheerful tiffin, with perhaps somewhat too much champagne.

The temple was a little red-walled affair, perched on the crest of the hill and reached by a flight of diabolically perpendicular steps. Back of the hallway was a terrace or balcony where you could walk and view the countryside for miles around. To the west the great mass of hills, hazy purple in the afternoon sunlight, with the shadows seaming their bare sides, forests darkening them, and bits of temples, white-walled, glistening clear and bright.

IN NORTH CHINA

Our little hill formed part of a spur running down from the main range, and we could follow this range as it wound into the distance to join the parental rocks. On all sides stretched the fields, lean, bare, brown after the reaping, furrowed and broken by the plow—dark, fresh-cultivated earth, with the roots of the gathered crops clinging to the clods of dirt. Here were gray, stubble-spiked plots, there rows of sprouting spring wheat, the green softening the dirty red of the earth. Little villages dotted the view here and there: the temples with their gray roofs sharp against the dark gray-green of the foliage; great clumps of white-trunked, squirmy-branched trees that shaded the graves of the departed great men of China who had been sleeping there for generations. All through the country, winding in and out, crossing, re-crossing, now in travel-worn valleys, now on the surface in a flat plain, raced the roads—great dust-buried highways, blue-covered city carts jolting along, luggage vans rattling swiftly by as the ponies and mules trotted and jangled under the driver's whip.

Mule trains, farmer-laden, brutes that plodded steadily along, donkeys going to market, droves of sheep that spread and rippled on the surface of the earth like an advancing flood; and here, there, everywhere, the procession of camels, ugly, sodden, stolid. We stood on the terrace and heard the unceasing clang-clang-clang of the camel bells, the barking of a dog from the nearest village, the cry of a child in the still air, the braying of a donkey in the court below, and the unceasing hum of insect life as it thrived and fattened in the warmth of the sun. Such was the picnic as I shall remember it. What the rest thought of it I don't know—everybody for himself in such matters!

An International Shindy—Terrific row in Peking's Coney Island district last night. One Italian sailor dead, two Austrian policemen dying, several more Italians mortally wounded. No one knows just how it happened, except that, as usual, a

woman played the principal rôle. A grog-shop was wrecked, and when the Austrian picket came up to investigate, two of them were shot. An Italian soldier was found in the place by the picket; since it was supposed he was drunk, he was shuffled into a rickshaw and sent to the barracks.

The doctor cursed his luck for being called out to see the usual sight, but in this case it was more serious. "That man's not drunk!" he said, "He's dead!" There was a call to quarters, a roll-call. One man, breathless, torn, bleeding, came in late. Fell from his couch, he said. Upon investigation he was found to be covered with blood, and in his quarters his revolver, with three cartridges missing, was found with his bloody mantle.

A detachment immediately went to the grog-shop, accompanied by the great Rospigliosi. Here everything was broken—furniture, bar, bottles, glasses—everything wrecked, and the wretched woman in the midst of it all. The whole crowd of Greeks, Italians and Chinese in the place were arrested but claimed French protection. These rows are always occurring in the Hata Men district.

WAITING FOR THE EMPEROR

A Quiet Day Briefly Told—Industrial Institute with Miss Carl and Mac in the morning. Painted all the afternoon. Collins and McCormick dined here. We sang.

Thanksgiving Day, 1902—Tiffin at American Students' Club. University of California against Cornell and West Point on club courts. Tie game. Great hullabaloo at the Legation—sermons, chow, tremendous musical and oratorical fête. Afterwards adjourned to Coolidge's and heard an extremely interesting interchange of reminiscences by him and Welbourne on Cuba and the Philippines. A good Thanksgiving.

A Visit to the Famous London Times *Correspondent*—After a tumble from my rickshaw I managed to get out to Morrison's place through the water gates. We dined together, and he talked much of himself and his works. Regretted that he could not write—it was very difficult for him. Hard for him to accomplish anything, he said. Showed me photographs of brother and sister and father. His father was head of Seeley College, Victoria; his brother a great athlete in Scotland; he himself a doctor of Edinburgh and Madrid, but always intended to be a newspaper man. Began in New Guinea, where he was nearly killed by a spear-thrust. Then he took his degree in medicine and practised. Went with the *Times* in '95. Made the trip from Bangkok to Yunnan Fu to Mengtze and back to Bangkok overland—a tremendous undertaking. He turned over a number of photographs to me, from which I am to make full-page drawings for his book, *The Experiences of a Times Correspondent in the Far East*. It seems almost too good to be true that I should be working with such a man. The only thing I fear is that one who is such a a tireless worker will never have time to do this outside work, and for this reason the book will never be written. However, we hope for the best. I now have photographs of the Amur and Siam on which to commence work. If I can only do well, my future may begin to shape itself. He, Morrison, knows China from one end to the other—has immense political influence and a great deal of back-stairs knowledge of what goes on, more than even the I. G. himself. I am to have the chance of sketching him and hope to do something that will be of value to him. He is a most charming man to meet—in appearance, stocky, with sloping shoulders and big head, though a short neck supports it. His features are very pleasant indeed, regular and clean-cut eyes, blue-gray and twinkling, and a strange, wondering smile playing about the corners of his mouth. His hair is never brushed, or at least, if it is, never looks it. He has a happy faculty of getting acquainted with every one, and what is more to the point, finding out all about them without telling anything about himself in return. His questions are quick and very much to the point. He watches the speaker closely and when he is pumped dry of all information, the Doctor nods his head and smiles.

TEA AFTER THE LONG VIGIL

An All Day's Walk—Today I took an all day's walk with B——. Incidentally, we found a court graveyard wherein were buried the various court eunuchs. We talked on almost every conceivable subject. Certainly he is a most delightful

man. He impresses on one forcibly the thought that, to succeed, one must oneself learn to be quiet, not to try to impress people with one's own importance.

A Day in Early Winter—First snow of the season today. Called on Mrs. Gatrell with Flaherty, and found her a most charming woman, absolutely natural, good American mother, no affectation, cordial and true and winsome, with a brilliant pair of eyes. . . . Tiffin with Mrs. Meyers, Misses Campbell and West, Baroness Romano [wife of the present Italian ambassador to the United States who was at that time *chargé d'affaires* at Peking] and their brothers. Because of this, late for the hockey game. Sent Sir Robert a copy of *Verse and Worse*. [This was a frivolous volume by J. O. P. Bland, with illustrations by Straight.] He refused it without opening it. Not polite. Called on the Baroness Romano, and then worked on a drawing of the scaffolding of the von Ketteler monument. Nothing else to-day except that my Chinese, just now, is being enthusiastically neglected and that I must take a brace in the near future.

"*An Evening out of Kipling*"—Dinner with the Chancery Mess. Hynd and McCormick with the "Padre", one Mr. V——, a clergyman who likes his cigar and his whiskey and soda, and sings and plays. Is a good fellow all around. The whole evening has left the impression of *camaraderie* and manliness tinged with the color of the Siege tales; for three of the men went through it all, and McCormick came up shortly after the relief. Tales of Russians and Germans on the march, their weird singing, of trials of guilty Chinese officials by mixed courts composed of English, German and Italian officers. The hospitality that ran rampant between the British officers in the Temple of Heaven and the Americans in the Temple of Agriculture. It was an evening out of Kipling.

Chinese Wedding-Gifts—My Chinese teacher told me how geese were painted red and sent as wedding-presents. They are sold by the recipients, and bought and sent again by other people, to be sold once more, and passed on again, never to be eaten. Sheep are also painted red on such occasions.

The von Ketteler Monument—The Chinese Government, acting according to the terms of the Peace Protocol signed in the fall of 1900, has been working steadily on the monument for a year and a half. It is to be raised on the spot where von Ketteler [German Minister] was killed, as a perpetual warning against such outrages in the future.

For many months the stone-cutters were constantly at work in the roped-off space. In September the foundation piles had been driven in and all was ready for the superstructure. Thereupon the Chinese artisans proceeded to erect this mammoth scaffolding, which now towers above all the neighboring buildings. It is constructed throughout of long fir poles, bound together by hempen rope, the huge legs and shafts being formed by bundles of these sticks, none of them more than eight inches in diameter and varying from twenty to fifty feet in length. In the whole structure not a nail was used. It is a triumph of engineering and hard labor. More than one hundred and fifty feet high, it is so immense that I fear the real stone structure underneath, when the wooden veil is thrown aside, will seem an anti-climax.

The labor is all performed by coolies whose songs rise weird and shrieking all through the day from eight o'clock to five. All the traffic of this busy part of the city—carts large and small, small trains, pack mules, donkeys, rickshaws and wheelbarrows, not to mention the ceaseless stream of humanity—must pass through little dark passageways between the outside of the great pillars of uprights and the low shop fronts on either side of the street.

The work on the monument proper is now but half finished. When the scaffolding is taken down the stone-carvers will be called in to complete their work — a task that will take another year and a half. The whole thing is an example of Chinese economy. No rattling, no clattering of hammers, merely the binding and twisting with hempen rope of almost three thousand long poles to build a scaffolding that will be taken apart and used over and over again for years to come.

The Imperial Court's Moving-Day—Up at half past six this morning, and through the misty, frozen streets to the northwest city. Once on the Pingtze, Shaw and I alighted from our rickshaws and went on foot to the north. All was a bustle of preparation for the court's moving. Officials and policemen and coolies, rattling carts, camel trains—for the moment sidetracked—hustled out of the way in anticipation. Riders would dash by, bearing messages. Came vast baggage-vans, forerunners of the court, and big, swinging, tramping lines of coolies bearing round, dragon-blazoned boxes tied up in yellow silk.

Near the Hsi Chih Men we met the first relays of chair-bearers, men dressed in purple and red gauze-like stuff, brilliantly flowered. Eight men on little shaggy ponies waited beside the highway for the coming of the court. In the big enclosure just outside the main gate and inside the smaller one, the outworks of the defense, was a group of cavalrymen waiting. We went on through the gates over the little piles of earth in the archway and into the street beyond. The little guard-houses were brushed and swept, and the men stood about in their best bibs and tuckers. We went on through a jumble of carts until we came to the foot-bridge. Beyond that was a body of infantry with large orange banners.

Squirming our way between carts and ponies and donkeys, we went on around the turn to the right and down to the Imperial boat-house. Just at the bridge we met the vanguard of the procession, officials in furs and embroidery mounted on mules and ponies came riding down upon us, ordering us summarily out of the way. Finally, just as the first troops came on, we were hustled off to the right of the bridge, and here on a pile of dirt we watched the Empress Dowager go by in her yellow chair. She was a nice-looking little old lady with a Roman nose, brown and neat. She looked from side to side, evidently taking in everything but neither smiling nor bowing to the crowd. After her came a muddle of lancers and bowmen, the weapons of the bowmen being incased in splendid leather covers.

The whole affair was a confused jumble of color, of drums and bugles, glistening bayonets, waving banners, shouting men, red-coated chair-bearers, silk-clad officials, calling, jostling, pushing this way and that. The Empress went on to the boat-house, alighted, and went in for

tiffin. We had tried to take a photograph as the procession passed, but an official put his head in the way as I snapped the camera.

Gaiety at the British Legation—We danced at Lady Susan's [Lady Susan Townley, wife of the British chargé d'affaires]. It was a beautiful evening, the mist silvery in the moonlight. Our procession was a long one, six chairs and three rickshaws, the former swinging steadily along, somber in the half light, their lanterns on either side and the broad-hatted coolies tramp-tramp-tramping with their steady gait.

Once in the ballroom we found ourselves truly international. There were Englishmen, of course, brilliant in scarlet mess-jackets; Austrians; a Russian in top-boots; diplomats and soldiers, with at least twenty-five ladies—a most wonderful aggregation for Peking. Waltzes and polkas, a barn dance, and two splendid Scotch reels. The Legation is a Chinese house adapted, rich in Chinese paneling, red and buff papers setting off the dark wood; ceilings in green and gold; long curtains in many patterns.

At the American Minister's—We dined at the Congers' and it was by all odds the most exciting evening I ever passed at the Legation. After dinner everything was fairly orderly for a time. The elder Miss Young played the piano and her sister the violin, and they played extremely well. It was the best music I had heard in a year or more. Brent recited several times, and McCormick, Drolett and myself contributed coon songs. That finished, we danced; then, the music giving out, Cowell gave a sailor's hornpipe, everybody whistling the accompaniment. Then the fair Miss Ragsdale and myself executed a cake-walk, but only after a fashion, for the music was too bad, and you need a rattling, banging ragtime to get the spirit of it. Dancing again and more coon songs and Louis Fuertes' celebrated gorilla story. I walked home beside the chair of the younger of the two sisters and saw them safely in Sir Robert's gate.

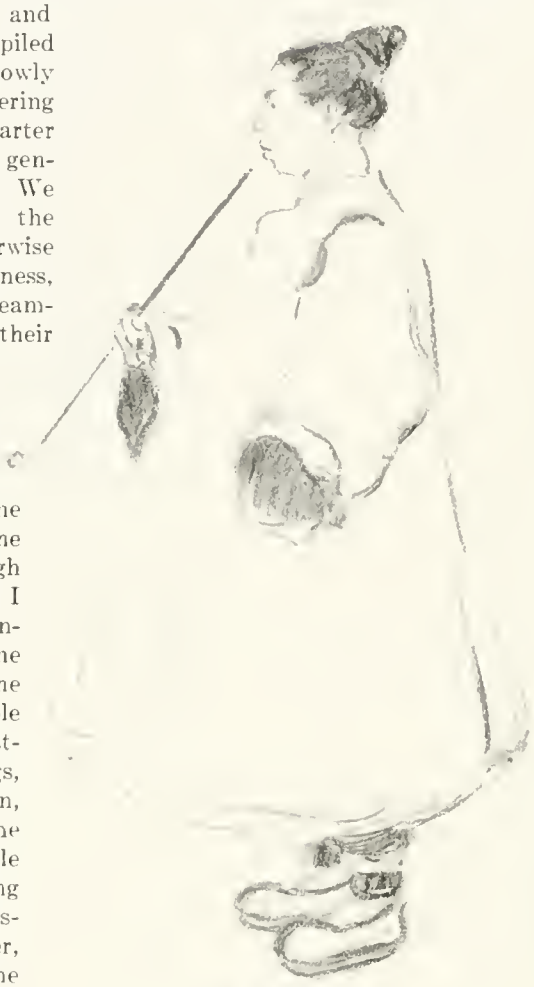
A LAMA FROM DEEP MONGOLIA

HIGH PRIEST IN YAH-NAIR HELMET

An Imperial Adventure in the Disguise of a Lama— My long-suffering servant came back at last from his trip over the muddy road to the Yung Ho Kung [the famous Lama temple just within the northern wall of Peking], to find the recreant priest who had promised by all his Mongol gods to come down that day and arrange for my visit. My friend would wait till ten o'clock in the evening for me; then the gates would close.

I collected my sketch-books and pencils, cigars and cane, and piled into the damp cart. We went slowly along, splashing, lurching, foundering in the dark; the boy and the carter on the shaft cursing creation in general and the mule in particular. We passed a few stray carts and the usual lot of policemen. Otherwise all was a black, murky loneliness, scarcely livened by the yellow, gleaming street-lamps that were doing their cheap best to throw streaks of light over the mud river.

At the Yung Ho Kung, the two lamas, my confederates, were waiting. The lamasery was asleep. As we entered the little paved court and made for the candlelight that gleamed through the open door at the other end, I could hear peaceful and easy-conscienced snores issuing from the rooms on the northern side. The priest who had arranged the whole business began to tell me, suggesting all manner of direful things, how much trouble it had been, how much ashamed he was to come and see me because the man inside wanted so much money for passing me in, how, if they were ever discovered bringing in a foreigner, their heads would be forfeit. The pressing need for money was again brought home, with the terrors of the Imperial bodyguard, the Pa Ta Chen, and the alacrity and pleasure with which they would decapitate the innocent offender.



A MANCHU WOMAN

The priest with me waxed confidential. He told me of the life of the lama, the training from childhood, the monthly stipend of rice — enough, but no more than enough to keep the wolf from the door. He told me of Buddha, the Great and Good; how he came to Mongolia many centuries ago to preach faith and kindness to all manner of living things and how it was their duty as his followers to be silent and introspective and lead pure lives. As he talked, his eyes brightened, and he was carried away by his own words into that pleasant state of believing that all the virtues one may be extolling are one's own personal attributes rather than intangible generalities.

The lama went away and I dozed over my cigar, interrupted now and then by attendants who kept pressing food and drink on me until I had an annoying stomach-ache. The night wore on. The visitors in the courtyard, high priests from the Yellow Temple north of the city, awakened and demanded tea, talking now in Mongol, now in Chinese, bestirring themselves and preparing for a long vigil before the altar.

Soon it was time to go in. Secreting my revolver (why, I hardly know) in my coat pocket, I put on the purple lama robe and donned the flat, cymbal-like straw hat. My hair had been clipped earlier in the evening—a wonderful operation, performed by a priest who knelt on the brick flagging and clipped and gouged with a pair of nail-scissors, while I bowed my head almost into the tallow dip that furnished the light for the amateur barber. Shuffling along, I followed my guide through the passageway out into the open. We walked along, jostling soldiers and priests, coolies and officials.

There was no time to waste, for any halt might mean detection. Inside the second enclosure there were fewer people. They hustled me up a steep flight of stairs. Climbing in between the supports of the altar, I crouched in the dust and watched the light flicker and disappear as my friend Wang went down the stairs and left me alone.

I sat and waited. But the air became too stifling in my hiding-place and I ventured out, sitting on one of the praying-stools in in front of the altar. In the soft light of the breaking day the wonders of the room began to unfold themselves before me. When I had first mounted the stairs, a tiny light had glimmered on the thrones of four altars, but it had spluttered out and left me in darkness. Now I walked about the great room, feeling the shadowy shapes on the long rows of shelves against the walls, wondering each minute whether something would come crashing down. Hearing steps, I hurried behind a partition that screened off the altar at the southern end.

As I crouched here, I saw light in the hallway, and a priest appeared. Suddenly I realized that my shelter was glass, and I crouched lower, afraid to stir lest a rustle or creak betray me. The old man went from altar to altar, arranging the skull-goblets of wine, lighting candles, raising to his forehead the brazen vessels which served as lamps and then replacing them before each divinity. Finally, to my relief, he went away and trotted downstairs.

I resumed my wandering then. Great scrolls with parti-colored sacred designs hung, dust-covered, from the roof-beams, curtaining the fronts of the altars, forming canopies above the crowned heads of the Mongol gods. I examined the altar settings, the lotus stands, the double fishes, the draped flags, and the great golden idol, impassive, forbidding in the expression of its set smile and half-closed eyes, sitting enthroned against a background of silken paintings, mellowed by dust and time and scarcely discernible. On either side again were other

altars, and, between and beyond, tier on tier of small clay images.

From afar I could hear the bugles of the Emperor's guard. Wang Lama came to me again, this time with a small boy. The guardian accompanied him, and threw the big doors wide open. At the bidding of my guide I went softly to a doorway, and lying flat on the floor, crept along the sill, and then carefully crawled over the edge of the balcony. Through a small break in the carving I could see all that was going on in the court below. The eunuch, who had for hours been sitting at the entrance, rose and held up a long wand of incense. The bugles drew nearer and nearer, and at last ceased, and we knew the Emperor had come.

Soon we heard the patter of approaching footsteps. Led by a high official came a double file of eight high priests, red-button men in yellow lacquered hats, each carrying a stick of burning incense. They advanced at a rapid pace, a similar column coming from the opposite side. Another official, two more priests in tall *Yah-Nair* helmets, carrying golden censers— and then the Emperor. Behind him came eight more priests and nine princes of the blood.

As the Emperor made his obeisance before the altar, the priests chanted in their deep tones to the usual accompaniment of drums and cymbals and trumpets. It was over in a minute. The priests went on, and the Emperor passed through the *tien* to the next altar. The followers, large men carrying many parcels wrapped in yellow silk—except one that seemed to be a sword sheathed in yellow plush—sauntered after him in a most disorderly manner without ceremony of any kind.

I lay quiet for a few moments and then went downstairs, where I waited until Wang Lama came back to lead me into the broad daylight again. I shuffled along through the courtyard, imitating as nearly as I could the pace of the priests I had been watching. The Emperor's chair stood in the center of the court, resplendent with golden trappings and yellow shafts, the bearers in white-spotted purple gowns of gauze and spiked helmets. There were fat eunuchs, and officers in latter-day uniform, and among them all, the ever-present servant with tea.

At last there was a stir. All eyes turned to the east. The high priest kneeled and the idlers rose to their feet in expectancy. Again the priests with censers, the attendant officials and the Emperor. He made a peculiar impression. As you saw him, wearing only the ordinary hat with the blood-red button, a dark silken surcoat that hid even his dragon badge, it was hard to realize that this very young, very delicate-looking man was the ruler, in name at least, over four hundred million people. A weak face he had, with arching, jet-black eyebrows. He kept his shoulders and head thrown back as he walked to his chair, but his eyes were on the ground. The *cortège* passed through the side gate most unpretentiously.

TIEN LAMA

Then there was a tumultuous rush of priests for the temple gate, and through this mêlée I passed almost unnoticed out into the long courtyard and quickly on to the little cell that I had left some three hours before. People stared at me, it is true, but no one said a word. Wang Lama and I pledged each other in a cup of wine. Quickly bundling up my own occidental clothes and lighting a cigar, I made for the gateway. The Chinese on the street jeered a little, wondering at a lama so tall and so red withal.

TEMPLE ATTENDANT

[The news of the affair spread quickly, as all news does in Peking, losing nothing in color and piquancy, and presently came to the I. G.'s ears. The private secretary was summoned for a quarter of an hour's talk behind closed doors, and again the know-alls of the staff predicted an enforced resignation. A highly favored treatment for young Customs employees who incurred the chief's displeasure was a transfer to some desolate post on the borders of Tibet or in Mongolia, and this fate was predicted for Straight. The upshot of the interview was that the I. G. burst unexpectedly into laughter and, declaring himself very busy, ordered the offender back to his desk. The only misfortune that resulted was the suspension of the accommodating lama from his job for one month, and his upkeep for this period fell upon Straight's purse.]

A Twinge of Conscience—A walk with Shaw to the Princes' Tombs, where all was bleak and cold, the trees soughing in the cold south wind that came whistling up over the grave-strewn plain and bringing whirls of dust from the plowed fields. In the evening dined with Flaherty before the Shakespeare reading at which we finished *The Merchant of*

DOCTOR GEORGE E. MORRISON, CORRESPONDENT FOR THE LONDON "TIMES" IN PEKING

Venice. The feeling is growing on me that I ought to up-stakes and dig for home, lead the strenuous life, and be a man in a world of men, not a "pampered, cursing fool in an Eastern clime".

Sir Robert Hart's Violin Danced at Sir Robert's last night and had a farewell to Welbourne at the club. This afternoon Sir Robert had the first garden-party of the season. Lady Susan, Lady Arthur Russell, and her daughters, Mrs. Fischer, Miss Cholmondeley and others. After most of the people had gone, leaving Count von Schlippenbach, Wilzer, Richardson, Mrs. Bob Little, Mrs. Carruthers and myself, Sir Robert produced a wonderful sort of violin, a sort of gramophone with strings, and proceeded to play a few notes thereon. The Count then took it and played rather prettily, the I. G. watching him, aghast all the time lest he should damage it, and the minute he had finished, snatching the instrument and running away with it like a child with a favorite toy.

Concerning Sir Robert Hart, the Inspector-General

I dined with Mr. Aglen [now Sir Francis Aglen, the present inspector-general] tonight, and after dinner he discussed the I. G. at length, reviewing the old man's career. In the early days Robert Hart was a consular student, grinding at Chinese, later deputy commissioner at Canton, then in charge of the Yangtze valley—a young man of twenty-four, dictating to men far older than himself and with far longer record in the service, fighting the prejudice of his employers, the Chinese, on one side and the hostility of the foreign mercantile community on the other, steering straight and clean through the turbulent waters.

He never shirked responsibility. His keen judgment sorted the important from the worthless. His remarkable memory stored up precedent after precedent on all cases. Building up his service, pulling order out of chaos, ruling with a firm hand, he yet found time for little loves, for letters and poetry. He was at his heyday in the eighties, when there were no international jealousies in China, when a minister came out to hibernate for a year or two, sit tight, save money and romp on to new fields when

all business with the Chinese was done by having the diplomats call on Sir Robert and get his advice and act accordingly.

His prestige among the Chinese was unassailable then. Year after year the plot thickened, but he still played his game, enlarging his field of usefulness with the larger needs of the Eastern question. Strong in his position, with a vast knowledge of Chinese character and viewpoint, he has been the most notable figure in Eastern politics.

He is cordially hated — not for himself, perhaps, but for his institutions — by all provincial officials. But all men appointed from the capital to provincial posts call on the I. G.

A man with a tremendous brain and a rare genius for organization. Yet he takes interest in every little thing, knows all that goes on about him, writes notes on friendship and love to many and many a maiden.

A Collection of Buddhas—This afternoon Dr. Korsakoff very kindly took me to see the collection of Buddhas owned by Gomboïeff, the Russian postmaster, and a splendid sight it is. The old fellow, a Buriat, grizzled and wrinkled, with a face of marked Mongolian type, has been in Peking thirty years. He has charge of the large mail-bags that go down each day for a rapid trip across Manchuria and Siberia.

Gomboïeff's brother was a lama, very high in his calling, a living Buddha in fact, holding sway over a tremendous lamasery in southern Mongolia. Through him the postmaster had got his treasures. He told me that before the siege he had more than a thousand specimens. Now he is reduced to seven hundred. There are gods of all sorts and sizes—bronze, wood, gold, silver—sitting, standing, lying—fierce gods riding blue-faced bulls, Mongol skull-devils painted and graven.

He has pictures as well, and inlaid models of pagodas. His bedroom is next the hall where he has his treasures arranged, tier on tier, shelf on shelf, and on the table there are still other gods not yet classified. There are scrolls on the walls, and books of prayer—indeed, all the paraphernalia of a temple. Golden and silver lions and elephants on carved-wood pedestals guard the entrance to his sanctuary. I had to talk French to Dr. Korsakoff and Chinese to the old Buriat, while they talked with each other in Russian. I shall go again and often and become steeped in the lore of the Holy Man of the East.

Home Is the Place—A talk with X—— on the Tertium Quid question. As in many other things his ideas are easy, kindly and altogether like himself— passive, lacking in force. Whether this is due to his bad health or to some peculiar moral kink I don't know. In his life, unsatisfactory as it must be, he finds a certain doleful pleasure in thinking, "Who am I that I should have more?" He seems to feel himself cast upon the tide of life, to be carried hither, thither, willy, nilly, satisfied if he only keeps his head up and goes easily without too great a jarring by hostile floods.

To me this seems cowardly. 'Tis better to have fought and lost than never to have fought at all. Sometimes I must try the fight, either by keeping myself headed for the mark in China, forcing upon myself a life of energy and endeavor, or by going home and having the necessity of strife forced upon me by powers over which I have no control. There is nothing in the life of a successful commissioner of customs to stir one's heart-strings. China port life must be a dull, unsatisfactory thing at best. Home is the place. Shall I start on a five years' course of preparation or not? This cannot go on. Peking is better than all other places in China — and Peking is unendurable.

More Good Resolutions—This dining-out business is interesting, often even fascinating — and largely worthless. It is not work, nor Chinese, nor politics, nor anything. If one does not buckle down to learn things when one is young, when, I'd like to know, will one ever have the time to do it? Again it was brought home to me what a fool I have been not to read more in Morrison's library [probably the most famous library on China in the world, sold by Dr. Morrison to the Japanese] and keep myself better informed on the East. I must brace up and become serious.

Another International Row—This time it's the Japanese and Germans. On the Japanese side the trouble was of long standing. Madame Butterfly had been more thrifty than patriotic, and while her own countrymen, being poorly paid, had sipped their beer unkissed by the fair maids who thronged the place, Germans and Americans and British had been in high favor.

The men of Mars from Japan resented the sordid slight put upon them, and when a new draft of troops came, they were heirs to the old grudge. On New Year's Day, being more rather than less tight, a band of soldiers began to make themselves objectionable all around the place. Not content with this, they started to maul the poor woman who was proprietress. She, thinking more of her New Year's finery than of her person, set up a howl.

The chivalrous mailed fist from the vicinity of central Europe could not stand for this; so it pulled itself together and went to the rescue. A fine row ensued. One of the Jappies made off in the direction of the barracks and yelled for help. The Germans, knowing it would soon not be healthy for them in that neighborhood, cleared, leaving the Japanese the field.

In a few minutes some sixty came rushing in to find their sturdy foemen a minus quantity. Speeches followed, and it was at last decided that the place was a blot on the Hata Men Street and had never treated them fairly anyway. So they broke up the furniture, smashed the mirrors, broke the lamps—in short, demolished the whole shop.

No international complications will follow, for it was the place rather than the Germans that the Japanese were bent on damaging—and they succeeded reasonably well.

An Anniversary—This, January third, is the anniversary of my arrival in Shanghai. Where will Willard be a year from now? A twelvemonth holds as many possibilities—what will happen none but a prophet may tell, and I am not that.

[In less than a month after this, Straight had resigned from the Customs and was on his way to Japan as a correspondent for the Associated Press and Reuter's in the Russo-Japanese War.]

Chapter III
WAR CORRESPONDENT

"ON Tuesday evening the first of the mighty host of rumors which are sure to set tongues wagging during the next few months came in, telling of the heavy firing that had been heard at Shanhai-kuan and Peitai-ho, towns on the Gulf of Peichihli and about a hundred miles in a straight line from Port Arthur."

Willard Straight made this entry in his diary February 10, 1904. It was his record of the opening of the Russo-Japanese War. And he continued to tell of the excitement in Peking in the days following.

"Saw Morrison at noon and he was jubilant. 'I have waited six years for this war and I've hoped for it and prayed for it, and when the telegram came the other night, I could hardly sleep, I was so excited.' He carries a small sort of Brassey in his pocket with the names of all cruisers in the Far East ticked off in blue pencil—most methodical!

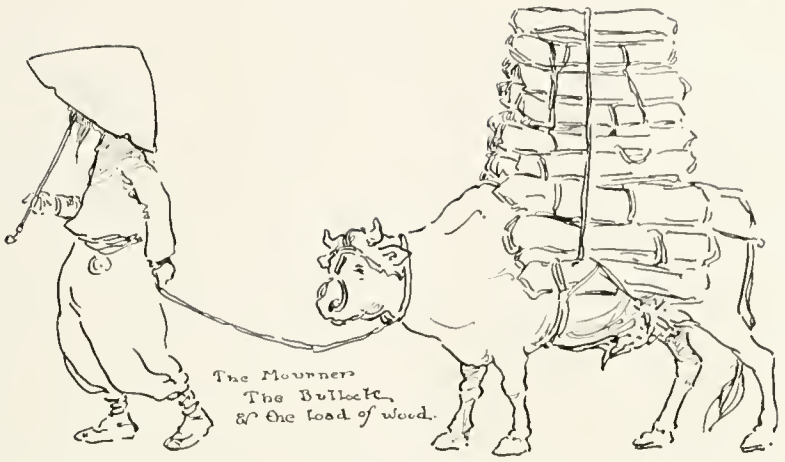
"The Japanese have been distributing small handbills yesterday, with the story of their first victories; today, with the dates when war began. They have posted a huge bulletin in the Chien Men arch, the busiest part of the city, and a man stands pointing it out to passers-by. It seems a strange move with many potentialities. It is the time of year [Chinese New Year] when the most gossiping is done, so that the whole city is agog. Then, too, the place is full of Mongols and Russian prestige is bound to suffer tremendously. For these nomads will carry the story of the Muscovite defeat [the rumor of Japanese torpedo-boats sliding in among the Russian fleet, sinking battle-ships] back to their native plains all through Central Asia. The terror with which the name of the Great White Czar fills the wanderer's breast will turn as the story of his reverses is passed from *yurt* to *yurt*.

"Sir Robert had Shanghai and Chefoo telegrams telling of the annihilation of the Russian fleet off Port Arthur. Mr. Aglen brought the news to the office. The staff immediately turned itself into a council of war. Kurosawa had been sent off post haste to the Japanese Minister to verify, if possible, the current rumors. He came back trembling with excitement. Nothing official had been received, nothing—but, he added, it seemed that there had been a wire telling of a naval engagement. Yes, something of that sort was known. It might be true; he didn't know. 'Y-you know I d-don't take much interest in all these rumors; I am a peace man.' And he sat down with the despatch upside down in front of him. One could see that he was full of information, wild with a desire to tell, yet keeping a stiff hold until finally the strain was too great and he burst forth.

"The *Shun Tien Shih Pao*, the Chino-Japanese paper that has been distributing the extras, has been instructed that any such course in the future will be severely dealt with. This comes from the Legation. How far this outward show may be sincere no one can tell. Certainly the wholesale diffusion of the news of Japanese victories has had a tremendous effect on the Chinese mind and the city is highly excited. The common people are said to believe that China is again at war with the foreign Powers, that the Russian losses have been inflicted by Chinese men-of-war and that the troops at Shanhai-kuan will soon come into collision with the Czar's forces. This may lead to unpleasant developments if it be not stopped at once."

The news brought quick action from Straight. "The last week has witnessed about as complete a change in all my plans as could well be imagined. On Tuesday night came a wire from Collins [Robert Moore Collins, Peking

correspondent for the Associated Press and Reuter's], directing Gatrell to send me on to Nagasaki. My delight knew no bounds. The time for which I had been hoping for nearly two months past had come at last, and it was time for me to decide whether or not the Customs could hold me in its Dragon's claws. On Wednesday morning I saw Aglen, who, at his morning's interview, told the I. G. that I wanted to leave to go to the front as a war correspondent. When I saw Sir Robert a little while after, he was very kind indeed.



"I received many letters from many people: from Mr. Conger [American minister at Peking] to Griscom and Allen [American ministers at Tokyo and Seoul respectively], from Sir Ernest [Sir Ernest Satow, British minister at Peking] to Sir Claude Macdonald [British minister at Tokyo], Jordan [British minister at Seoul], Brinkley and Young [British editors in Japan], as well as Viscount Aoki, formerly minister for Foreign Affairs, from Uchida [Japanese minister at Peking] to Baron Komura [minister for Foreign Affairs] and Baron Chinda, as well as Major General Fukushima, from Mumm to Graf von Arco-Valley, as well as minor ones to more modest people. Thus equipped I could say farewell to the steady old service, particularly since, on leaving, the I. G. had written me a very nice letter and sent me his photograph, telling me — at least, so it seemed — through Aglen, that, when I was looking for something else in China, I had better go to him first."

Men from all the legations, from his own Customs circle and from the banks and trading companies, came to see Straight off at the train. "I have burned my bridges"—this in a letter to Claude Bragdon, the architect in whose office he had once worked during a summer vacation—"and am off to the wars as a correspondent for Reuter's and the A. P., with a sketch-book in one hand and a pad in the other and a telegraph wire around my neck. I am in high fettle, for I see chances for much exciting experience and many real sketches."

At Tokyo, Straight soon discovered that the conditions of modern warfare imposed new limitations upon the war correspondent's freedom of action, and that the Japanese taxed his powers to the utmost.

"The air of the Imperial Hotel was a bright blue from early morn to golden sunset," he wrote. "Famous correspondents, veterans of countless campaigns, were held up, bound hand and foot, by the dapper little Orientals whose attitude throughout has been greatly wondered at and most profanely admired. There was a Knight of the Telegraph, who lost an arm in South Africa; Melton Prior, the artist of the *Illustrated London News;* O. K. Davis, with Richard [Richard Harding Davis] on the road; Frederick Palmer of *Collier's;* Bass of the Chicago *Herald;* Martin Egan of the Associated Press; Collins for Reuter's and a host of others less notable but equally discontent. The situation is unique in the annals of journalism. A government holding the rabid pressmen at a distance, censoring their simplest stories, yet patting them on the back, dining them, wining them, giving them picnics and luncheons and theatrical performances, and trying in every way to make their stay a pleasant one, but, siren-like, to deaden their sense of duty and their desire to get into the field, affords a spectacle that few have ever witnessed. Yet such is the daring game that the Japanese government has taken upon itself to play."

THE KOREAN—CALM AND CONTENT WITH THE WORLD

Japan brought back to him memories of his childhood days in Tokyo. "The street smells were old friends," he wrote at Kobe on his way to the capital. "I knew the rancid odor of the fish-shops, the reek of the pickled turnips, the scent of the bean-cake; and across the chasm of the years came recollections of the highways I had rickshawed through in the old days when Japan was not the world-power she has made herself today. There is a refinement in the architecture, a delicacy in even the wooden lattice on the meanest house, that charms one after the heavy rudeness of the Chinese street." But the encroachments of the western world spoiled the picture when he had seen a little more of Tokyo. "To see a gray-haired Oriental, in silk and in wooden shoes, strangely capped with a Dutch derby or something equally comic, stepping from a modern electric car, has in it an element of unfitness. Flowered,

well-drawn posters proclaim the merits of various kinds of beer. The countryside is made hideous with great white characters advertising cigarettes. One hoped that the Japanese, an essentially artistic race, might have retained their ancient traditions, simple, delicate, esthetic, yet be a business people at the same time. But the race for the almighty dollar has in it some insidious poison that taints the purest ideals."

As a war correspondent, Straight was a speculation. He was neither conversant with the tricks of the reporter's trade, nor had he had occasion to discover whether he had a "nose for news". It was no doubt his consuming interest in the international struggle, even more than his quick intelligence, that first suggested him to Collins as promising material. With the imprisoned group of correspondents of international reputation, under the orders of two veterans, Collins and Martin Egan, his first lesson in practical newspaper work began. His daily task consisted in going back and forth between the offices of diplomats and government officials. When the newspaper men were finally let out of leash, the Japanese and Russian armies confronted each other along the Yalu, which forms the boundary between Korea and Manchuria. Seoul, the capital of Korea, was the chief inland station on the rumor line. Straight was assigned to cover it. The Japanese were absolute masters of Korea as soon as war with Russia began. They used the ports and shipping, government buildings and grounds as they pleased. Troops were quartered and fed on the country as the military operations demanded. According to the new treaty, Japan guaranteed the integrity and independence of Korea—this sounded well—but it actually assumed a protectorate. It had a thorough contempt for its ward and took no pains to conceal it. Not only did Tokyo dictate the policy as to foreign affairs—it virtually took over the internal administration.

Straight's rare gift for winning the confidence of men in high place compensated for his lack of newspaper experience. He was soon on friendly terms with the Japanese officials stationed in Seoul, the personages of the native imperial court, and, more important, with half a dozen or so Americans and Englishmen who had lived in Korea many years, who knew the ins and outs of governmental and social life, and who were prepared to give invaluable hints to a stranger to whom they took a liking.

"McDonnel and myself dined with Hagiwara and Kuroda at a Japanese restaurant," Straight wrote in May. "Geishas danced and I cannot say that I was particularly impressed. Their attitudes seemed awkward, particularly the strange heel and toe movement. Hagiwara's song on the beauties of Seoul impressed me more than anything else. He, the first secretary of the Legation, sat there and sang of the spring flowers, the tender greens of the foliage near his home, of the summer scenes on the river, the silver shining moon, of the autumn and the golden maple, of the snows that come with the shortened days, and the whitened hills. He improvised as he went along. He seemed so near to nature! It is the keynote of Japanese life. The diplomat, the man who with his chiefs outwitted the Russians, sang of the simple woodland and its charms. We cold Westerners are too fearful of raising a scornful laugh ever to show our true feelings in such an open way. The soldier fighting with every scientific appliance known in modern warfare, understanding its mechanism, finds pleasure in admiring the iris bloom or the cherry blossoms!"

But, despite the help he got from the friends he made, Straight feared that he was not breaking even in the news race. "Stiff competition, certainly," he wrote after running back and forth between legations. "I was well discouraged this afternoon after making two absolutely futile visits to the Foreign Office. I've been in charge two days and sent three wires, of what value I know not. Time will tell.

"The more I read in the other papers, the more I am

AN ARGUMENT

convinced that my lack of experience is a great handicap, a difficulty that must and will be overcome. Another thing—I must not say unkind things about people, nor must I get too enthusiastic. Freshness must above all things be avoided. What a damned fool one can be on occasion! Steady at the game, always at your intellectual best, always observant, making notes—that's the way to do it. Now go."

It interested him to compare the Koreans with other Orientals, both in appearance and in character.

"There is more color," he wrote, "much more of a pictorial quality, for some reason, than one feels in a Chinese thoroughfare: the white-garbed men, their flimsy hats, sometimes straight, sometimes cocked rakishly over one eye, the huge umbrella under which the mourner wends his way and the small flag-screen he holds to hide the deep lines of sorrow that sadden his features; the women—Moorish they seem, almost—with their cloaks over their heads. Green is the prevalent color, white is common, purple one seldom sees. Children run about, their pigtails flapping, a gay sight in pink coats.

"The Korean seems to typify the spirit of the Orient in the chrysalis—a white cocoon. In China it was the Taoist priest who brought back most vividly the mind-picture that fairy tales and mellowed *kakemono* had formed when I was a small boy in Japan. About the snowy-garbed Korean there is the atmosphere of a Japanese print; there is a thinness of coloring, a softness, that impresses itself upon me, in a sentimental way entirely. So calm, so dignified he seems, so absolutely self-contained, as he saunters on his way—he does not stroll nor stride—puffing his pipe, content with the world, evidently and above all content with himself.

"And in this land so much more benighted, if you will use the term, so much more itself and of itself than its island neighbor—so much less sordid and prosaic than its continental neighbor—one finds the trolley-car pounding through the streets, and, strangest of all, the one American business house that I have seen in all the Far East that lives up to its home ideals and observes the regulation office hours, eight to six."

A WHITE-GARBED KOREAN

GENERAL KUROKI, VICTOR OF THE YALU

The Japanese government organized a junket for members of the House of Peers and the House of Commons, officials of the Foreign Office and foreign military and naval attachés. Straight was one of the newspaper men who went along on the *Manchuria*. The plan was to arrive at Port Arthur in time to see the Japanese forces, land and sea, make their final attack. They did not see the fall of Port Arthur—that event was to be postponed for many months—but they did sail up the Yalu where they saw the Japanese fleet and were received by the great Admiral Togo on his flag-ship.

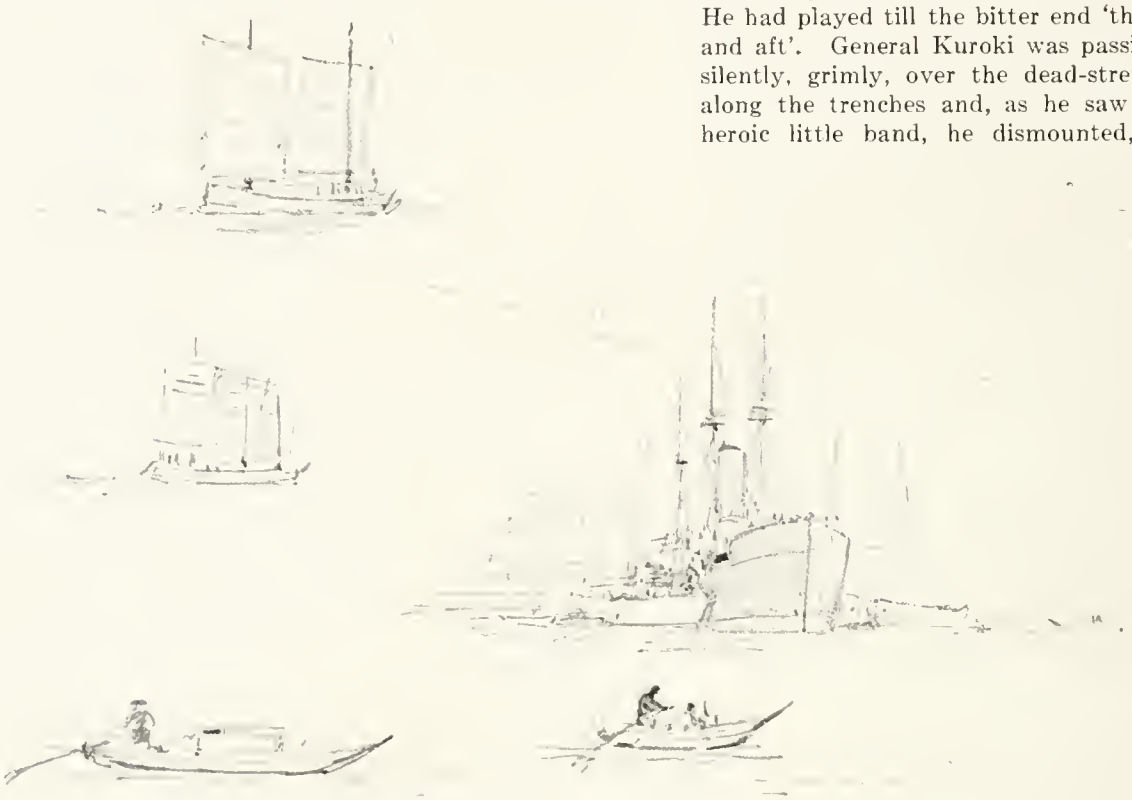
"The little man, quiet, modest, stepped into the crowded, stifling ward-room. He was simple—his face browned by exposure, deep lines around his mouth. He addressed us, through Captain Takarabe as interpreter, and told us that he was honored by our presence.

"Frederick Villiers started to answer, but Wright, who was standing directly in front of the Admiral, took the words from his mouth and told him what an honor we felt had been conferred upon us. Colquhoun then stepped in and on behalf of the British press thanked the Admiral with further protestations of an undeserved honor. Then, when that had been translated, taking the matter in my own hands, on behalf of the Associated Press, I, too, thanked the Admiral, told him how the American people had followed his every move and

honored him above all the admirals at the present day. He thanked me. The servants brought in champagne and we drank to his health and future victories. It was an international tribute to the Admiral. As in every similar case, he was bored—bored to death."

Before the party left, Togo signed the sketch that Straight had made of him during the exchange of courtesies.

Toward the end of July, Straight was back in the whirl of Tokyo. Battles had been fought. Well as the war had come so far, the outcome was by no means certain. Everybody was excited and anxious. Frederick Palmer and others were back from the battlefields. They told of the bloody struggles in which Kuroki's armies had been engaged. "Palmer was one of the most interesting of



THE HARBOR OF NAGASAKI

the returned heroes," Straight wrote. "The Japanese artillery, he says, is not as good as the Russian. The latter can shoot farther and faster. Another point is that the Japanese, in his artillery work as in everything else, is a textbook man. Rule and rote he can appreciate and work out—originality he has none. In organization the army doubtless has no superior in the world, but the Japanese soldier hasn't the dash and verve of the white man.

"After three days of fighting at Heiying-tai, Kuroki seemed to realize that he was up against it. Palmer saw him on the hillside [previous to a great Japanese victory], so the story goes, squatting on his haunches, his head in his hands, looking over the dust-shrouded valley into the red sunset—his bronzed faced hard, his eyes steel. The old man had tried every trick and had always been driven back by a leaden hell-fire. These people whom he had defeated stoutly for six months were holding him at last. He looked across at the Russian positions, the white smoke-puffs, the yellow-brown dust, golden-red with the last rays of the closing day. Then the old man arose, as one with the rheumatism, and walked toward his village headquarters. The chill of evening was in the *kaoliang*, the evening breeze bore the stench of his nation's dead, the foul battle-dust, the sound of distant firing."

"After dinner I had some talk with Donohue of the London *Chronicle*. He was full of the Sha-ho fight. With Kuroki's army he had been permitted to go everywhere and had had his fill of ghastliness. One clump of Russian dead lay huddled in the trenches, surrounded by a ring of dead in Japanese khaki. In the center of the awful pile lay a drummer boy, his arm around his drum, his drumsticks tightly clenched in blood-reddened hands. The sheepskin of the drumheads was torn and riddled. He had played till the bitter end 'the drums of the fore and aft'. General Kuroki was passing by. He looked silently, grimly, over the dead-strewn field. He rode along the trenches and, as he saw the border of this heroic little band, he dismounted, went nearer and looked, saluted and walked away."

"Davis [Richard Harding] came back day before yesterday. He didn't look as I had imagined he would; nor did he talk in the way. His accent was decidedly American, his speech quick, his lips firm, his eye nervous and bright. Egan says that he was not up to his usual form. The Lady [Mrs. Davis] watched him and smiled contentedly. She beamed. She was happy. Before, she had been lonely a good deal. We had a drink or two. They told stories of the campaign in Manchuria. Davis told the strange story of 'Wang', the servitor and menial to George Lynch of Ireland. Trained was Wang to the ways of the wily correspondent. He had first been washed. He was proud of it and showed his ochered skin with pride, glorying in the paleness of what had formerly been but caked mud. Wang was then sent through the institute, which had a faculty of three. The cigarettes were always to be found under Brill's bed. Davis signed chits and all visitors were given drinks upon entering the room. There was a small manual in connection with the latter: 'Present!' and Wang held the bottle in front of him; 'Ready!' 'Aim!' 'Fire!' and the whisky flowed. 'When' was the signal for brakes—but only that. To stop was fatal—that is, on the word rather than a little after. Wang had a Tansan opener and corkscrew as his badges of office and was then

A JAPANESE STUDENT

given a dollar watch. This he wanted to show everyone and compare other people's time with his. Lynch wanted to take him to the front. Wang was not so anxious. When the 'show-down' came, there was much wailing and shaking knees. Wang did not go and Lynch trekked for Newchwang without the whisky soldier."

"Tonight Murata, the inventor of the rifle, dined with us—the chief of the General Staff, Yamagata's aide. I came past him as he was making his way toward the house. One of the brightest officers in Japan, he had only a single rickshaw. He was walking up the steep hill—he and his officers. Such simplicity is to be found nowhere else in the world. Made fun and told stories about France—was free and easy and delightful. After dinner I sang 'Danny Deever' and 'The British Soldier', which Haraguchi is going to use for the Japanese army.

"He left early and Sato told us stories—the young man who wanted the sword that he might disembowel the Russians and not have to bite their throats in the hand-to-hand fighting. Then the story of the *samurai* boy who must once in his life face death—make up his mind that he is to die. His own case, at the age of twelve, coming home from school, to find his great-uncle and his mother all serious, a naked sword on a little wooden rack, the house all in order; to be told that he had disgraced the family—he had dishonored his father's sword and killed a dog. He would be given the privilege of committing *hara-kiri*, for he was a samurai's son. His great-uncle gave him an object lesson, showed him how it was done and told him to proceed, wrapping the blade in paper, that it might not cut his hand, and telling him that he must do as he had seen his great-uncle do, in earnest. The boy begged for mercy. His kinsman and his mother were immovable. Was he afraid to die? If so, they might help him, and the uncle put his hand on his sword. The boy's tears stopped. He knew his time had come and bowed. He opened his dress, rubbed his abdomen three times. He put out his hand and grasped the sword. He knew no more till a cry '*Maté* (Stop)' brought him to his senses. The reprieve at last. The knife had been at his vitals. An instant more and he would have been dead by his own hand. He waited, dazed, in a death sweat. His courage had been tested. He had faced death. This is what the Russians are fighting."

"'It is too terrible.' The Lieutenant grasped my hand and ushered me into the bare room I knew so well. His clean-cut face, the face of the samurai, was drawn and tired. All night the wires had been coming in from Manchuria. Tales of the bloodiest fight—almost—in history. 'I have buried 4,500,' reports Kuroki. 'There were many more. I estimate the total casualties as about 20,000.' 'We have buried 8,500 Ninth Russians,' telegraphed Marshal Oyama. 'The casualties will exceed 50,000.'

"The Imperial Headquarters are in a great stucco building, with staring windows, yawning doors. The hallways are wide and bare, cold, gloomy, matting-floored. The entry is flanked with gray benches, where the rickshaw men and coolies wait—gleaning the latest news from the messengers scurrying by. Three old men sit at a low desk, their bullet heads sparsely grizzled with stubbly growth, their faces seamed with years and toil and worry. They were muttering and cackling today, their blue-uniformed shoulders hunched together. A fringe of sandaled, short-jacketed little boys hung about them, drinking in each word, open-eyed, grave beyond their years. A bell would ring, a small boy scamper off. Officers were passing to and fro. There were no signs of elation in their faces. They were appalled, staggered by the horror of the news.

"I went into the little room at the right of the entry. The typewriter was unhoused and the Lieutenant, the mimeographed sheets before him, translated the rows of—to me—meaningless Chinese characters—and the tale was but half told. Such was war. No wonder that Tokyo was quiet in the face of such a victory [Liao-yang]—a victory that had cost thousands upon thousands of lives. All credit to the Japanese for their forbearance

KOREAN IN STRAW RAIN-COAT

and consideration. They are as swept along by the flood-tide of fortune."

"It was the Emperor's birthday. He reviewed his troops—twenty-six thousand men—more than had ever been massed at one time on the Aoyama field. Yet this was war-time. Hundreds of thousands had gone to Manchuria. They were storming Port Arthur at this moment.

"The red-and-gilt coach of state rolled on the field. The Japanese bowed profoundly, not daring to raise their eyes. From the masses of troops around the field came a pæan of welcome, a fanfare of trumpets, no call, no rhythm, a shrill, clear volume of sound, beating, rising, falling, grim and in a way uncanny. The *cortège* stopped in front of the imperial pavilion and his Majesty alighted.

"The Emperor mounted a coal-black horse, his equerry walked by his side, watching every movement, and one accompanied the Crown Prince as well, though his horsemanship was better than that of the Emperor, who headed the little group of cavaliers in a circling ride around the field. The Body Guard Band, sixty strong, marched forward. They were playing a snappy French march. Then the long line of men, company front, their gaitered legs striking out in their peculiarly Japanese way, which is neither the German goose-step nor yet the French stride. The Captain raised his sword as he passed in front of the Emperor. There was no click of rifles coming to the port. The troops saluted by turning their heads sharply toward the War Lord, and then, as they went beyond, snapping their heads back again—eyes to the front.

"The Mikado sat immovable on his black steed. Before the last gun had wheeled into position, far away on the other side of the field, the Lancers were rustling along, guidons fluttering gaily. Again the horses were small, furry little beasts. The little men who rode them seemed ill at ease. They looked as if they might fall off at any moment.

"As the seven thousand men went by, the Emperor had remained absolutely still, leaning forward a little, watching his men. He was clad in simple, dark blue coat, white trousers and high boots, a plain cap with a red band—the general field uniform. Behind him were the Crown Prince on the right, then General Katsura, then Prince Arisugawa, then Marshal Yamagata. There was a strangeness about it all: the Emperor, worshiped by his people as more than human, a descendant of the gods, one of the least-known rulers in the world, surrounded by a wealth of oriental tradition, clad in a western uniform, reviewing his troops in the open air. In saluting him, the troops whom he reviewed turned to look on the imperial face—an act which forty years before would have been punishable with death. Yet those men who saluted him were ready to die for him; for to them he was a heaven-born ruler still. Even the crowd, which broke out into the field before he left, and cheered, having done an unheard-of thing, did not dare to look upon him as he passed.

DISCUSSING THE SIEGE OF PORT ARTHUR

"The Emperor drove away. The crowd could no longer be restrained. They rushed forward, and, as the Crown Prince stepped into his carriage, cheered wildly —*Banzai!* It was a gay crowd. There were rickshaw coolies and small shopkeepers in many colors, bare-armed craftsmen, round-hatted students, bare-legged little boys, men from the nearby bakeshops in white aprons and gauze shirts, showing the muscles of their broad chests. They raised their hands to heaven and shouted again and again. Never had such a thing been done in Japan before. The officials were dumfounded. The Crown Prince turned and looked at the crowding faces about him. That was all. The tumult was hushed. The bare heads were bowed. Then he turned again and, as he passed the foreigners' pavilion, saluted.

"There was real war-worth in that ill-drilled battalion, in the jolty battery, in the awkward squadron. They had left the fields and shops only a few months before. They were not the barrack veterans; they were raw, perhaps; but they had a brilliant record before them, and they were ready to live up to tradition, to fight for

WAITING FOR NEWS FROM THE FRONT

their Emperor, who reviewed them that day, as they marched on the sunny field, to the French quick-step."

Straight's personality, backed by the letters he had brought from Peking, had won him intimate relationship with the leaders of the diplomatic circle and social intercourse with the big men of Japan.

"There was a most distinguished gathering at the Griscoms' [Lloyd Griscom, American minister] last night," he wrote. "Could the Russians have bagged that large, white frame house and sent it kiting to the heart of Siberia, there would have been weeping and gnashing of teeth in the Island Empire. Katsura, the premier, Komura, minister for Foreign Affairs, Yamamoto, minister of the Navy, Marquis Ito, Count Inouye, the builders of empire, Chinda, vice-minister for Foreign Affairs, Ishii and Mutsu (the latter just returned from Washington), Kurino (who had been minister in Petersburg and conducted all the ante-bellum negotiations), a fine-looking dark man, keen and alert. The dinner was for Stevens, the newly appointed 'Dictator of Korea', Japanese nominee, adviser for Foreign Affairs to his Majesty the Emperor of the Hermit Kingdom. There was Denison, the power behind the throne in Japan, the foreign adviser and the brains of the 'Department of State', Ogawa and Nagasaki and others less prominent in the Japanese world. Here was the Marchioness Oyama, a charming woman, her face beautiful, the wife of the Japanese Commander-in-Chief, talking, chatting, when her heart must have been far away in the plains of Manchuria where her husband was leading her country's warsons to do battle for the Rising Sun. Several other Japanese ladies, less distinguished, all gathered about that sweetest of hostesses, Mrs. Griscom, a rare lady, eerie almost, gay as a girl.

"Robinson and I chatted with Marquis Ito, about cigarettes mostly. I had last seen him in Korea at Mlle. Sontag's and the great reception. This affair was different. Later we found him absorbed in reading the advertisements in the *Cosmopolitan*. Strange pastime for an Elder Statesman."

"It's a great thing, the evening session around the table at the club. One is not privileged every day to drink one's evening cocktail with the man who has the foreign relations of a nation in his hands. That certainly is very nearly Denison's position. He was the man who did all the ante-bellum correspondence and he is the man who will tell the Japanese how to make peace when the time comes. He has served them many years well."

"Then it was Marchioness Oyama. On Sunday afternoon I went to call by appointment. Two nights before, at the Wilsons', I had met her and in talking had discovered that she it was who had known and been a friend of my mother, and that it had been in the clothes of her children that the pictures of my sister and myself had been taken. It was at this same dinner that she had told the story of her imprisonment as a little girl in the castle of Isé, when she had to make cartridges for the men on the rampart, when the women had to put out the fires kindled by the besiegers' fire, and when they all went about carrying knives that they might kill themselves should the place be taken by assault. Here it was that they were besieged for thirty days, and, when they finally surrendered, the whole countryside was cleared of the farmers and all were sent north—transplanted root and branch—and Marshal Oyama had been among the besiegers and, wounded, had been forced to return to Tokyo."

The time for peace was approaching.

"On the morning of January 2, 1905," wrote Straight in Tokyo, on the fall of Port Arthur, "came the news of Stoessel's offer to discuss terms. Egan had gone to the General Staff. I was finishing a late breakfast when the call came for me to tear off to the telegraph office to deposit enough money to carry.

"As I hurried through the streets the *gogai* men were just rushing out with their freshly printed extras, shouting as I had never heard them shout before. Shopkeepers, householders were dashing out into the roadway to seize a sheet, then go mad with joy. Students, soldiers, rickshaw men, passing officials in their holiday raiment peered over each other's shoulders, raised their hands to heaven, screaming with joy. The foolish Japanese bands were soon braying through the city; processions were forming everywhere, waving flags, shouting 'Banzai'. From that time to this there has been no rest. All day and night the people are marching the streets—schools, merchants, guilds, the 'Nihombashi Fishmongers', the 'Shiba Dyers' all in their best clothing, strangely capped with white sailor hats or red-and-blue jockey arrangements, parading here and there. At night Hibiya Park is ablaze with lights. It seems almost as if the first two or three days' celebrations were only by way of practice, as if the people didn't realize fully that the enemy had been delivered into their hands. Now the organized merrymaking has commenced. For ten years they have waited and they have a right to their triumph."

SIR ERNEST SATOW

But the Japanese Foreign Office raised "a frightful stew" about a cable the Associated Press sent out that America, France, England were being talked of as possible direct or indirect peace intermediaries. They sent for the Associated Press man. How did he feel warranted in saying that Japan was prepared to make terms characterized as reasonable? The war party in Russia would appreciate such a telegram as evidence of Japanese weakness. Accordingly, another telegram was sent out, quoting "a certain Japanese official" as denying the report. That seemed to satisfy the Foreign Office. Of course, Theodore Roosevelt's letters prove that the Associated Press was perfectly correct in its first despatch and ahead of the crowd on the news, and the Associated Press men were aware of the fact.

"It seems to me in the street," Straight wrote, "that, should it come to a pinch, Baron Komura and his fellows might be quite prepared to shake hands behind some one's broad protecting back."

The war was by no means over.

"I am enjoying Tokyo," wrote Straight. "But it is not War and that is what I started out 'for to see'. If the army goes to Vladivostok, I am hoping to form part of that expedition."

After several weeks in charge of the Associated Press office in Egan's absence, Straight got away to Newchwang to go up to the front.

"Far away to the north the armies are waiting to spring at one another's throats; Kuropatkin and Oyama bide their time. Even now, while we are riding at anchor, there may be a great battle on, in or near the old Manchu city."

Word had been sent on ahead from the Tokyo government. The powerful Baron Komura himself had written to the Japanese Consul, Segawa, to say that the young American, Willard Straight, was to have courteous attention and all possible aid. It was this impressive backing, in addition to the prestige of the two great news-gathering agencies he represented, that passed him through to the headquarters of Marshal Oyama and General Kuroki.

"Marshal Oyama entered the room, not with the sharp quick-step, but with a little shuffle," wrote Straight of their meeting. "'I have heard from Mr. Griscom and Sir Claude about you,' he said. 'They asked me to do all I could and I promised to do so.' I told him that his hospitality was all that could be desired—more. His throat was bandaged. It was from the trip to the Tombs, made the day before. It was nothing, he said, but he could not smoke for the moment, that was all. He was clad in a general's simple blue uniform, with a line of places for orders on his breast, and his field marshal's badge as his only decoration. If one did not know who and what he was, one would never imagine that this simple, friendly old gentleman was the commander of 450,000 of his countrymen. So kindly, so absolutely unassuming! He did not have much to say—seemed pleased when I asked him when he would move his headquarters to Harbin, but did not answer. He had been sixteen years minister of war. He was a soldier, not a politician. It was his first visit to Mukden—a conqueror, not a visitor merely. He would let me come in to make a quick sketch at any time, as soon as he was better. He had come alone to a Chinese palace, to welcome a humble stranger. The courts were bare, only an occasional soldier stirring here and there, no dashing in of orderlies, no clanking of generals' spurs and boots."

Straight found General Kuroki, the victor of the Yalu, equally simple.

"He was very kindly. There was little said. He puffed tentatively at a cigarette, laughed a great deal, smiled. Later, General Fujii, the chief of Staff, came in. He was much jollier, but had little to say. The General did, however, give me permission to come in and sketch him at any time. He wore the simple black field uniform of the general and a pair of heavy felt, fur-edged Chinese slippers. On one side of his room was a rough steel bed. An overcoat hung on the brown wall, two or three pairs of boots near by. Kuroki had just received two old Polish coins from a clothing merchant in Toledo, Ohio, who asked in return some small souvenir, even a bit of a Russian uniform. Kuroki said that he was going to Poland as soon as the war was over—so many letters had he received from beautiful Polish ladies. His eyes were his most striking feature, liquid brown, sparkling, the whites of a yellowing brown, always smiling and laughing in a friendly way. With his knife he showed how the First, Third and Fourth armies had come together at Tiehling. The General proposed my health in an aluminum cup of Russian champagne. Later, I had a chance to sketch the old gentleman, who wanted hair on the bald spots and a black moustache put in the picture. He has a fine grim mouth, prominent cheek bones, a hard bullet head.

"Today I finished the sketch of General Kuroki. I rose to go but the General asked me to stop and talk a bit. He said that in many respects this campaign had been harder than his other fights, more of it and longer drawn out. He thought that the Russians had been learning a great deal that they fought much better at Mukden than they had ever done on the Yalu. But he thought that they were discouraged and disheartened. Many deserters had come in. They were tired of war. The trouble with them always had been that their officers were the first to run away. How could the men be expected to fight? Maybe Harbin next. He asked about Togo and the *Manchu Maru* and how she was fitted up and said that he wanted to return to Japan in her much more than in a battle-ship. He would like to be comfortable, but he really preferred war to peace, Manchuria to Tokyo, for it was his business, his profession, soldiering.

"I picture in my mind the little tent in the hills where he sits for hours and hours, looking over the hills and valleys, doing nothing but smoke and think and dream!

"Only a little while and General Kuroki and General Fujii were having him in constantly as a guest at their mess," wrote Collins of Straight. "Incidentally, his presence was a tonic and delight to the only correspondents then left with the army—somewhat in the position of prisoners of state—Frederick Palmer and myself."

Straight remained with the Japanese Army—going up to the front with General Pershing, who was there for the United States Army—until President Roosevelt's proposal put an end to hostilities. Then he went back to Tokyo, closed his connections with the Associated Press and Reuter's, and was appointed private secretary to the new American Minister to Korea, Edwin V. Morgan, under the title of vice-consul.

Chapter IV
AT THE LEGATION IN KOREA

WHEN Edwin V. Morgan went to Seoul as Minister to Korea after the close of the Russo-Japanese War, in 1905, Willard Straight was appointed his secretary, under the official title of vice-consul-general. Already, when stationed there for Reuter's and the Associated Press during the war, he had had the chance to witness the inner workings of one of the most futile, corrupt, and withal the most comical governments that the world has ever known. His position of secretary to the American Minister gave him now a yet more intimate view.

He was torn between the impulse to mourn for Korea and the impulse to laugh at it. The suicide of the learned and patriotic Min Yong Whan upon the surrender to Japan could but evoke compassion for both this honored old man and his betrayed fatherland. But the Emperor, compelling his ministers to sign the surrender and then denying all responsibility for it, trembling with fright while he hid in a rear apartment with his favorite mistress—here indeed was a fit subject for mockery.

First of all official ceremonies, upon the arrival of the new Minister, was the audience with the Emperor. Straight has left an account of it in his diary.

"I had been unpacking, so that I left for the hotel to dress about half an hour before we were due at the palace. My 'boy' had been ill and was not about. In consequence, I had to start all the Korean servants on a still hunt through my trunks to find white neckties and gloves and the rest of the paraphernalia. The result was that I was clothed but not dressed, and arrived at the Legation just as the procession was getting under way. That of course was very bad form. There was a Korean palace official in his gold clothes walking beside the Minister's chair, the buglers were tooting, and all was most impressive while I, my tall hat over one eye, my necktie around my ears and my coat on any old way, rushed by in a rickshaw.

"That upset things a little, for the palace is just next door. Luckily I found my chair and, by making the coolies run—a most undignified thing for the rising young diplomat—I was able to bring up a very bad last. With my face dripping, I bowed my way in at the Palace past the Lord High Chamberlain and all the generals of the Korean army. As it is mostly generals, there were a good many.

"Dixey [Arthur Sturgis Dixey, student interpreter, much admired by Straight] was the greatest thing you ever saw. He was clad in the white coat and heaven-blue breeks of the Boston Cadets. You might think that he was a lieutenant-colonel. But he's only a high private. Of course, though, he had a sword. That was borrowed from the British Legation. There had been a major of a Scotch regiment here, who had luckily left one of his weapons behind. Paddock [United States consul-general] and I were in evening dress. The Koreans were much impressed by the fine turnout and the Baby Prince, the 'Omelet', as he is called, being the son of Lady Om, the Number One Concubine, could not take his eyes off the brilliant Dixey, and the Marine officer was jealous.

"After much to-do we were ushered into the Imperial Presence. The Emperor, the Crown Prince and the Chief Eunuch had draped themselves tastefully around a table at one side of the room. The Emperor (on account of the death of the Crown Princess) had on the mourning dress of grass-cloth and was capped by one of the little winged things that you see in old Chinese pictures of Ming court scenes. He seemed very much interested in everything, particularly in Dixey's uniform. Mr. Morgan gave him an autograph letter from the President, which I had been holding with both hands all swaddled in imperial yellow silk. Out in the hall the eunuchs were holding the Baby Prince on their shoulders so that he could see what his father and the foreigners were doing. We could hear him asking questions in a heavy stage whisper.

"The Minister's interpreter, in blue and gold and pigeon's-egg trimmings, stood by with head lowered. At all the nice parts of the Minister's speech about the ties that bound the two nations and our great interest in His Majesty's health, the Emperor smiled all around. He replied in a few hackneyed words and asked us each a question in turn. Then we bowed ourselves out. That was all, except the sweet champagne after we went into the ante-chamber. Never was place better named than that ante-chamber; for it is there that all the Japanese demands are presented and the poor Korean monarch

has to 'fork out' a good deal of his hard-squeezed wealth.

"The palace is right next door to the Legation, and so, when we reached our own yard, we could see the Emperor on his side porch, rubbering over to see how we got out of our chairs. Of course we paid no attention. Later the Baby Prince was held up again by the eunuchs and he too had a look at how we paid off the guard of honor, ten dollars per."

From the friends that he made among the old residents of Seoul, Straight learned much of the recent history of the country. For a long time Korea had been, as he described it, a pawn on the Far Eastern chessboard. In Korea was to be found the extreme case of foreign exploitation. An offshoot of China, it had become an independent kingdom only to be turned into a battleground for the contending interests of Russia and Japan. A corrupt and degenerate court made the country an easy victim for the outsider with the deepest craft and the longest purse. For Russia it was like a great finger reaching out for the commercial and political domination of the Pacific. To Japan, it was valuable for both defensive and offensive reasons. If Russia became master, Korea would be a continual threat. But if Japan herself could take command, Korea would become, not only a field for Japanese trade and a colony for settlement by an overflowing population, but also a priceless base of operations against Russia in Manchuria. At the outset of her war with Russia, Japan, with overpowering force, took possession of the country.

JAPANESE SOLDIER IN KOREA

Straight's principal source of information as to what had been passing in Korea for a score of years was McLeavy Brown (since become Sir John McLeavy Brown), then chief of Korean customs. He was the protector of the nation's finances, occupying a position similar to that of Sir Robert Hart in China. A genial gentleman, a trifle cynical, he knew Japanese and Korean character in all their twists and turns, and did not hesitate to give his opinion of either, gained from his pivotal position in the customs.

"Brown had the key to the Treasury," wrote Straight after a dinner at which the veteran customs official had related some of his experiences with the court, "and whenever the Koreans came for money, he refused them unless their case was a good one. Once the Russians, whose policy it was to let them do all the foolishness they could conceive of (and that was a good deal), told them to take as much as they wanted to. This pleased the Koreans. They took a hundred rickshaw coolies and went away laden with one hundred cases, each containing two thousand silver yen.

"This money was taken into the palace and there the Emperor howled with joy. It is reported that he danced with pleasure around the silver boxes, and I can easily imagine him, with the eunuchs standing around with their tongues hanging out, thinking how much of it would eventually find its way into their clothes. His Majesty bestowed a large fistful on the principal thief and more on the others; then all the servants came forward with outstretched hands, begging for their share. They all had it and, when they were through, no one knew what had become of the money. It seems that a week later Mr. Brown, out of curiosity, asked them what they had done with it and they answered that they did not know.

"Then there is the story of a Japanese company's transactions with the government. The trouble started when the Emperor awoke one day to the fact that his colleagues, rulers of the East, were all emperors while he at that time was only a king. The imperial coronation should be the occasion for much merrymaking. There should be foreign fleets and foreign representatives.

"So it was arranged. The local officials, always glad for a new chance at graft, entered into the spirit of the celebration. Certainly they were the principal beneficiaries, after the Japanese. There should be a fleet. Seventeen admirals were appointed. For 300,000 yen they purchased an old collier. They paid 200,000 yen and claimed that the company owed them the balance (for a ginseng crop). The company refused to accept these terms. For an additional 100,000 yen they allowed the Koreans to hoist their flag on the steamer which they painted white and cleaned, raising her value from the original 20,000 yen to about 25,000.

"When war broke out, the Japanese seized this one Korean man-o'-war and used her in their first attempt to block the entrance to Port Arthur. That showed how much they thought the 400,000-yen ship was worth. The company still claims the balance of the account and it will be taken from the Koreans sooner or later.

"On another occasion the Emperor decided that he must have a coach. From somewhere in Tonkin or Japan or from some Shanghai livery-stable a wonderful old victoria was resurrected. This was gilded and the wheels painted red and the insides thereof upholstered in yellow. This cost the Emperor some 20,000 yen. It was really a very handsome affair and made an extraordinarily good place for the palace coolies to sleep when it was finally stored in an outhouse.

"Of course fine horses had to be purchased to draw the coach. The Master of the Imperial Stud accumulated somewhere a collection of worn-out barbs and some artillery horses from North China. They stayed in the

Royal Stables until some months later, after almost starving to death, although a liberal sum had been provided each month for their up-keep. They were finally eaten, one by one, by the stable-boys.

"The latest gold brick seems to be the acquisition of an antiquated Japanese fountain, brought from some small, rural park in Japan and sold to the court for 150,000 yen. This is supplied from a water-works system erected by the Japanese. They have laid a line of pipes from an alleged spring in the hills and, when they want the fountain to play, they send coolies into the hills to pour water down the upper end. There are no springs in the vicinity and the pipes were never laid more than half way to the source they were supposed to tap."

SIR JOHN McLEAVY BROWN

The Emperor had many ways of squandering money, but the one he liked best was trying to get back political refugees who had gone to hide in Japan. He wanted them for decapitation. Almost anybody who would come to him with a new scheme for bringing back the offenders, would get a full purse with which to try out his plan. In the palace there was a sort of household treasury where the revenue from the sale of offices and other evil sources was kept, and this was used for all manner of strange things, according to the whim of the ruler.

The American firm of Collbran and Bostwick represented modern enterprise and big business in Korea. The electric railway in Seoul, the lighting, the telephones, were only a part of their miscellaneous ventures.

"Not a week passes but the Emperor wants something or other," wrote Straight. "His is a comic opera court at best, and there are many comic opera wants. But this wonderful firm finds means of satisfying every whim. Sometimes it is expensive. On the Emperor's birthday Collbran and Bostwick presented to him a splendid diamond with their best wishes. His Majesty was overjoyed, but his pleasure was short-lived, for the Crown Prince looked upon the jewel with envious eyes. Being a tender, loving parent, the Emperor gave it to his son. As usual in his bereavement he bethought himself of his business advisers, and sent word to them. 'We have presented the diamond you gave us to our son the Crown Prince.' To use the vernacular: 'It is up to you.' Needless to say the hint was acted upon and another stone was procured.

"The native court's idea of reform is well illustrated by the pet scheme of one Min Yong Whan, late Ambassador to the Coronation of the Czar, Minister to Washington and to Paris and the Lord knows what all besides. After close study of Occidental conditions he decided that the one thing necessary to emancipate completely his benighted land from senseless reverence for the past would be to import a troupe of French actresses and start a Seoul opera. His Majesty, influenced by his trusted henchman, had appropriated 100,000 yen for the project.

"A Frenchman was engaged to arrange everything. The Emperor was bent upon building a fine palace for the benefit of the ladies. Then someone made away with the 100,000 yen and the scheme fell through. But that was the plan suggested by a man who even to-day is considered one of the leading lights in the political world."

One of Brown's reminiscences, set down by Straight, was of the murder of the Queen, a decade before Straight came to Seoul.

"When the firing commenced early in the morning, the foreigners immediately went to the Palace. On his way to the gate Brown picked up the War Minister, who, clad in his red armor, was evidently well aware that something was up. With some of the foreign representatives Brown went back to the King's apartment north of the Lotus Pond. They asked him where the Queen was. He did not know. She was even then burning about a hundred feet away. When the Japanese or Koreans, whoever it was that committed the deed, had rushed in, the Queen had attempted to fly into another room but had been seized by the Minister for Communications, one Chang Ha, who held her until the others came and killed her. Then they threw the body out of the window and burned it. This man was a thief among thieves but had been trusted by both King and Queen.

"Brown told me that it was estimated that the Queen had killed or had had put to death some nine thousand people, generally on the suggestion of one of the Palace

WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN

WILLARD STRAIGHT AND THE LEGATION STAFF IN THE AMERICAN COMPOUND, SEOUL

sorcerers who wished to get hold of the property of the person impeached.

"Five months after the Queen's death, fearing a like fate, the King fled to the Russian Legation. The Crown Prince and King both climbed into chairs and were carried off with the palace women in front of them, at seven in the morning. At the Legation the King and the Crown Prince found their principal pleasure in piling wood in the big Russian stove. Yi Pon Chim, afterward Minister to Russia, had jumped over a wall, was a little lame, and was walking with a stick. He was generally full of the champagne which the Russians at this time gave free to all the court. He made such a nuisance of himself around the house that Mrs. Weber, to get rid of him, finally had him appointed Minister to Washington.

"The Ministries were all at this time in the large drawing-room of the Legation. A sofa, a screen, a table and a couple of chairs constituted a Ministry. The Minister of War alone had a separate office in the garden, where he had fixed himself in a sort of summerhouse, and there he held audience. One could call on all the rest of the Cabinet by simply going into the one large chamber and then bobbing about from screen to screen.

"Immediately the King was installed at the Legation, Lady Om, who had been banished by the Queen, turned up and lived in his bathroom."

The Lady Om, who then held the honor of being the Emperor's favorite, was accounted the most powerful person in the country. She had been ennobling her family, down to the least water coolie, by putting them in as governors of the city one at a time—a tenure of three or four days for each. Her ancestors for three generations back were fitted out with suitable titles, and every little while there was a celebration at the tombs of these deceased gentlemen, with much burning of tissue paper and other ceremonies prescribed for such occasions.

One of the functions of the Minister's secretary was to greet distinguished visitors from America. It was the visit of Miss Alice Roosevelt (Mrs. Nicholas Longworth) that led to Straight's friendship in later years with Theodore Roosevelt. He records vividly the enthusiasm with which the Koreans greeted the "American Princess".

"Miss Roosevelt is coming here with General Corbin, Admiral Train and the Lord knows how many others. Seoul the imperial portion of it is simply atingle. The Emperor is going to do great stunts here. Imperial honors only for this party! He has the German lady who has taken Miss Sontag's place reburnishing the palace—that is, the foreign one. She is laying awful carpets made in Germany. In this palace Admiral Train will sleep and the Corbins also. Miss Roosevelt stays in the Legation. If it rains she'll be drowned; for the place leaks badly.

"Since the Emperor is making a great play for American sympathy, he has decided to let Miss Roosevelt use the Ship of State. The best of all these stories in connection with Miss Roosevelt's visit is the one of why the Japanese Prince Fushimi on his recent visit didn't get the imperial coach. When he was expected, the Emperor sent word to one Tommy Koen, American, ex-oiler on a tramp steamer, and now engineer to the palace, to gum the game. This Tommy did. He stole the springs from the gilded coach of state and all the brass nuts from the other imperial carriages. Hasegawa, commander of the Japanese forces in Korea, went to have a look. Sure enough, the carriage couldn't be used. Where had all these things gone? 'Why, damn it, General, the Koreans stole all the brass in the place. You know what thieves they are!' The carriage-spring meantime was in Mr. Koen's forge, being

nicely burned and deprived of its red-and-gold paint. The General saw that that too was hopeless; so he took Fushimi in his own barouche.

"Next, Mr. Koen, being an American and a sailor, was appointed imperial equerry and master of horse, and was told off to greet the Princess at the station. Koen, having spent his life on the bounding wave, knew all about horses or anything else that rocked. He went to the stables and found a pair of blacks. There were only three pair left. All the others had been eaten by hungry stable-men.

"Mr. Koen took out the blacks and one of the Number Two imperial coaches and paraded through the city, followed by buglers. He wanted to get the horses into shape for Miss Roosevelt's arrival. There were beautiful red uniforms and liveries. Three or four men who had been to Shanghai or somewhere and who thought they knew something about driving were selected. But, when they tried on the uniforms, it was 'no go' and so other coachmen and footmen whom the liveries would fit had to be found.

"The scheme was to have a squad of Korean cavalry escort Miss Roosevelt. The Korean army was to be lined up along the route and fire salutes. But Paddock stopped that, for the Korean cavalry can only stick on by hanging to the pommels of their saddles and, at any function, are always sure to fall off, while their ponies invariably run away. Thus are we deprived of the special circus parade. It's really a shame; for it would have been the greatest thing of its kind that the Emperor of Korea ever perpetrated."

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"Upon Miss Roosevelt's arrival in Seoul, the streets were packed. The band struck up the 'Star-Spangled Banner' and the Korean officials in their gladdest frock coats were presented. Some of Hasegawa's staff were there, but they were left out in the presentation, and Miss Roosevelt piled into an imperial yellow chair. It was just dark. The air was murky and the roofs of the houses packed with people silhouetted against the evening sky. On either side of the procession ran lantern-bearers, swinging their strange red-and-blue silk lights.

"That night there was a 'scratch' dinner with the imperial band, and afterward we went to the palace, where Miss MacMillan, Miss Boardman, Senator Newlands, Longworth and Gillett were staying. This time Miss Roosevelt led them a merry chase. She walked as fast as she could, and it was a pretty good gait, with lanterns bobbing and the bugles tooting and policemen trotting beside her, the troops at attention. They were surprised, I'll warrant, but not a whit embarrassed. The monarch himself escorted Miss Roosevelt into the room on his arm, ogling her and rather ill at ease. The Crown Prince blinked. Korean officials, who, by special order of the Emperor, had many of them got themselves into European clothes for the first time, certainly did look, and, from their appearance, felt, like hell.

ALICE ROOSEVELT, WHOM THE KOREANS GREETED AS A PRINCESS, AND HER PARTY

"It was strange and wonderful to see Miss Roosevelt on the Emperor's arm, or, rather, him on hers, as they came into the banqueting hall, which looked more like a boarding-house parlor than anything else. We had a Korean chow and the Senator burned his face by leaving his spoon too near the charcoal heart of the soup-plate.

"The Roosevelt party came, saw and conquered. There were tiffins at the East Palace. Miss Roosevelt had luncheon with the palace ladies—again an innovation—and then one night the Korean Military Band came in. They made the weirdest and most awesome noise I ever heard, shrieks and the tumming of tomtoms, the shrill notes of the flute and the rolling of a bass horn. Then in the courtyard, the *gesang*, the Korean dancing-girls, did their stunts, the warrior dance, etc., etc.

"Of course the most interesting phase of the visit was the part the Japanese tried to play therein. In the first place, they attempted to put every obstacle in the way of Miss Roosevelt's having the imperial car. This belonged to the Emperor and they refused at first to let her have it. Then they asserted that Miss Roosevelt was not royalty, to which the Koreans replied that Mar-

quis Ito wasn't either. In Chemulpo the Japanese consul tried to ruin the welcome. He boarded the *Ohio*, which brought Miss Roosevelt, before Morgan, who had crossed on the *Alava*, had had time to get over to her. Then he tried to butt in and bring the party ashore, though the Koreans, who were the real hosts, had furnished their Customs launch for the purpose.

"I don't think that the Japanese imagined that we were making any political play. I am more inclined to think that they were principally afraid of the effect that the visit would have on the Koreans. These people are looking for straws just now, and the Roosevelt trip looked like a life-preserver to their jaundiced imaginations. This the Japanese tried to get around by appearing to be doing the entertaining themselves. Naturally they couldn't work any con game of that sort, but their actions were such that any feelings that I may have had before are much more so. The littleness of it all —not feeling strong enough even to let this poor people, whom, as Baron Kaneko says, they are going to regard and treat as an inferior race, have their own little party! They were not content to stand by and laugh at the footless

COLLIER COOLIES AT CHEMULPO

things these poor devils were inclined to do, but had to force themselves in everywhere and at all times."

The actions of the Koreans and Japanese so appealed to Straight's sense of humor that he could not resist composing some doggerel, which he confided to his diary.

TO MISS ROOSEVELT

When Alice came to Plunderland,
The Crown Prince sought her lily hand,
The Emperor had a pipe
Dream that this was where his native lane
Could shake the Japs forever and
Secure a friendship ripe
With father.

But now there's trouble brewing, for
The Emperor doth reign no more,
The Japanese are out for wealth,
They're not in business for their health.

The Koreans wail, "What can we do?
Our clothes is picked, our watches too,
Our country's in receivers' hands.
We've neither graft nor fees,
Since Alice came to Plunderland
We've nothing left to 'squeeze'."

On the very eve of the doings at the Palace, William J. Bryan came in. And so the great exponent of democracy was on hand to witness a display of autocratic force that would have shocked the Middle Ages. An American who then chanced to be official adviser of the Japanese Government stuck even more close to Mr. Bryan than did Straight, for it was his function to ward off from the Commoner information of a sort that might leave a bad impression of the new masters of the land.

In Seoul, Mr. Bryan's personality made him many friends. He maintained the same informality of dress and manner that marked him at home. At dinner in the hotel he put on a golf-cap to keep his scalp warm. When Straight called on him "he came down in a wonderful black alpaca cap, with a netting visor rolled up at the sides." But when he went to the Legation he had on the conventional top hat, and he wore a swallow-tail coat at the Emperor's audience. He said that he had been told that "when he was abroad, he'd have to wear knee breeches. But he hadn't brought his and thought it was all nonsense about people who called on a king having to wear knee breeches. Might as well force an Englishman to call at the White House in wampum and feathers."

"He told with full appreciation of its humor how he had come up in the train with Togo, who was on his way to his own great reception," relates Straight. "While the procession was forming Bryan's rickshaw man had insisted that he form a part of it, and to all his objections responded merely by putting him one place higher up. A final and desperate effort brought him to the head of the line, and then he went on for three miles—the only one in sight— through crowds jammed on either side, the men doffing their hats and the students cheering him, stealing Togo's triumph and beating him to his reception place by fifteen minutes."

But American travelers were not the only distinguished foreign guests received in audience by the Empire in the fall of 1905. Early in November Marquis Ito had arrived as special envoy from the Emperor of Japan and had presented a series of demands in treaty form. Japan had already practically taken over Korea. Marquis Ito was now to add the finishing touch. On the afternoon of November 17 Straight could see from his window at the Legation the palace compound filling with Japanese soldiery and police; the entrance and exit of nervous statesmen, some in Korean garb, some in frock coats; now and then even white-faced and shrinking royalty

itself, in the person of either Emperor or Crown Prince, as it pushed a curtain aside to peep out. Thus was the scene laid for the drama to be enacted a few hours later, the signing of the "treaty" under which Korea was to acknowledge itself a vassal of Japan.

The recollection of the murder of the Queen a decade before, under very similar circumstances, reduced the Emperor to a palsy of fright. He had installed himself behind locked doors with the Lady Om and there he stayed. The nation outside—that is, the articulate fraction of the nation—was aware of what was on foot and was clamoring against the surrender. The Emperor quaked with fear of his people's wrath—but he quaked still more with fear of the wrath of the Japanese. The people were distant and unorganized; the Japanese were present with ugly guns and pistols, even cannon, and with a meaning smile that emphasized rather than softened the threat. What was a poor man to do? He summoned his ministers—and sent them away again. No, he would not betray his beloved country. Yes, yes, he would sign—not sign himself, of course, but have his ministers sign—if these unbidden guests in the yard outside would only go away with their guns and pistols.

The suave and astute Marquis Ito had assured his Imperial Majesty of Korea of Japan's undying friendship if only Korea would affix its signature on the dotted line. That simple act was all that was necessary. General Hasegawa and the Japanese Minister, Hayashi, seconded him with cordial grimaces.

On the avenue leading to the palace a detachment of artillery, three batteries with eighteen guns, maneuvred playfully, unlimbering their pieces. An infantry battalion went through an open-order drill, with bayonet rushes, just opposite the Korean barracks. Crowds of people, angry but intimidated, jammed the streets. Anti-Japanese posters appeared suddenly and mysteriously on walls and were at once ripped off by Japanese policemen.

KOREAN WATCHING A PARADE

Late in the afternoon two Korean officials, emissaries from the Emperor, came hurrying over to the Legation and were received by Straight. His Majesty asked advice of his honored friends, the Americans. What should he do? The Japanese envoys were demanding an audience, and really he was too sick to grant them an interview—much too sick. This was an old, familiar device of the Emperor's, to avoid disagreeable conversations.

Straight reminded the emissaries that they had been counseled some time before to make a direct appeal to the American government. Mr. Morgan could not advise the Korean government, of course, until he had consulted the State Department at Washington.

"You have three courses," Straight told them: "one, to refuse the Japanese demands absolutely and take the consequences; two, to accept conditionally and under protest, reserving the right of appeal to foreign nations; three, to yield and make the best conditions possible."

They insisted that he take their message to Mr. Morgan and he did so; naturally enough, with no result. So they went sadly back to the Palace, with a parting assurance that His Majesty was really very sick.

"At half past ten o'clock that night" so runs Straight's diary—"I went out for a stroll around the compound. There was a rattling of rickshaws, and I went below. On looking over the wall I saw that the Japanese were going away. Hasegawa's carriage had already gone. I could see that the compound was still full of Japanese policemen. Koreans in their court dress were fluttering to and fro. It seemed impossible, as I stood there in the moonlight behind the hedge, that the fate of a nation had been sealed within fifty yards of where I stood, that an independent empire of twelve million people had agreed to subjugate itself to bullying and exploitation without a struggle.

"The next morning Yak, the interpreter, came in with tears in his eyes and a strange and wonderful cold sweat on his nose. 'They did it,' he said; 'they signed.' He said all the ministers except Han Kyusul, the premier, and his friend, the Minister of Agriculture, had signed. All accounts agree that the Premier did indeed stand out. It is said that when the others gave way he pleaded a headache, left the room, went into His Majesty's presence and smashed his official hat."

The final touch of *opéra bouffe* was given by the decision of the Emperor to banish the prime minister—not for any official act, but because that distracted statesman, in rushing out of the conference room to seek His Majesty, took the wrong passage and stumbled by mistake into the sacred room of the Lady Om herself. Such sacrilege was not to be condoned.

Two events growing out of the capitulation, the suicide of one of the ministers of state and the dismissal of McLeavy Brown, were thus described by Straight:

"Min Yong Whan bade farewell to this crowd of officials. He went to the house of a retainer and, having a room prepared, sat down on the floor, drove a knife into his throat, ripped it forward and killed himself. He was a man of almost royal blood, who could approach the Emperor as no one else could do, and a cousin of the murdered Queen.

"We heard of Min's suicide as we were going to the

train to bid farewell to the British Minister and to old McLeavy Brown. Here was the man whom the Russians and French had tried to force out time and again—abandoned by a government whose principal asset in this country he had been, who had done more for British interests here than any one else, in an instant ousted by the Japanese!

"With their usual damnable hypocrisy they had tried to persuade him to resign so that no one would criticize them. Being an old sportsman he would not do this, nor would he accept the solatium with which they tried to tempt him.

"The day before, I had been in this same station to bid farewell to Ito, who had done it all. Now I went back to the center of the city to learn more of Min's death. Here around the center square there were dense crowds; orderly they seemed, but muttering. Such a hopeless crowd you never saw.

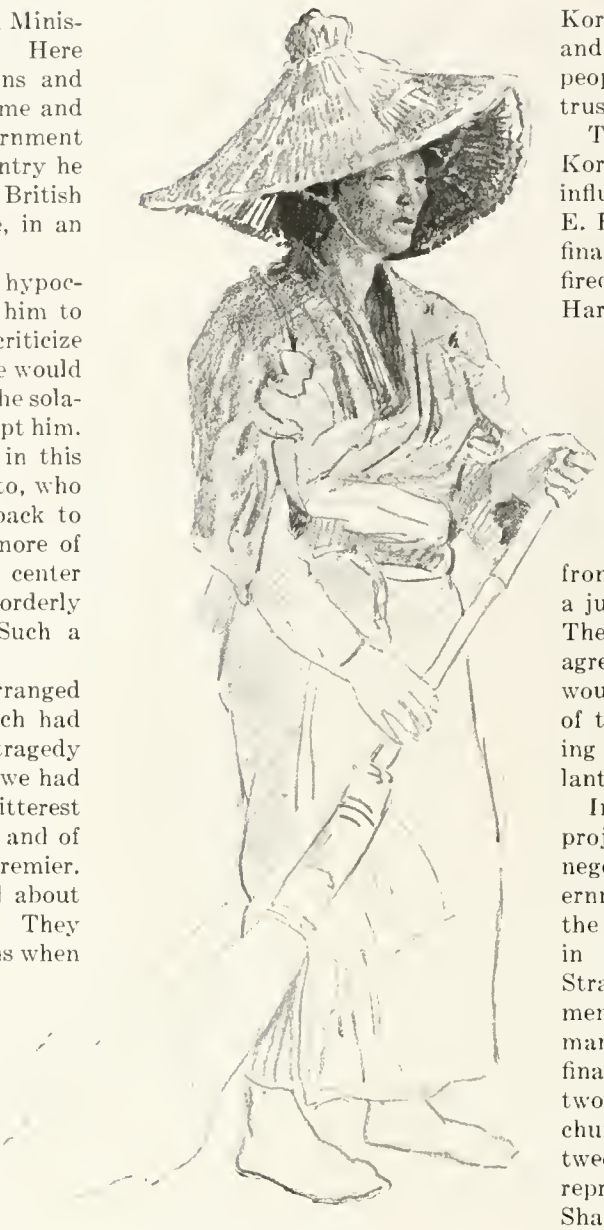
"To cap the climax we had arranged a Thanksgiving celebration, which had to go off notwithstanding the tragedy which had crushed us all. Here we had the missionary stories, the bitterest stories, the suicide of Min's wife and of Chyo, a highly respected ex-Premier. The whole community is excited about the withdrawal of the Legation. They voice the sentiment of the Koreans when they say that they have been betrayed. So they have. It may not be the fault of any one in particular, but certainly because of our treaty the Koreans have looked upon the United States as a friend to whom they could turn.

"It came as a cruel blow that the United States should have been the first to take such a step. It is claimed and I believe it is true, that Min's suicide was largely due to the withdrawal of this Legation. Poor Min, he did all that he could. He sealed his testimony with his blood, and if ever man died for his country it was he.

"Yet I cannot see that the Japanese could well have done aught else. One would admire them more if they would come out in the open and say that they wanted this place and would have it, that the people did object, and that they didn't care a damn, instead of trying to put it before the world that the Emperor and the people really appreciated the unselfishness of their aims, and want them to protect and develop the country.

"Such is the East. Coming back from the scene at the bell-tower, we heard the blatant tooting of a brass band and, sure enough, there they were—you know them—a strangely uniformed aggregation, tooting and braying away, the parade for a Japanese circus. Murder, suicide, arson and a circus!"

Straight's diary and letters show that it was always the highly placed—the Korean court circle—never the Korean people, whom he distrusted and lampooned. He was fond of the people. They were simple and trusting and honest.



JAPANESE HOUSEMAID

The American whose visit to Korea was to have the greatest influence on Straight's career was E. H. Harriman. At that time the financier's imagination had been fired by the thought of putting a Harriman transportation belt around the world. Already in control of the Union Pacific and Southern Pacific Railroads and the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, he had conceived the plan of linking up the ocean line with a railroad in Asia running from the sea through Manchuria to a junction with the Trans-Siberian. Then he hoped to conclude such agreements with the Russians as would make the Trans-Siberian a part of the Harriman system, completing the world belt-line with an Atlantic steamship line to New York.

In connection with this heroic project, and with certain financial negotiations with the Japanese Government, he came to the East. In the course of his journeys in Korea in 1905 he was impressed by Straight's alertness and keen judgment: and it was to be E. H. Harriman who, first among American financiers, lent a sympathetic ear, two or three years later, to the Manchurian loan project arranged between Straight and the Imperial representative at Mukden, Tang Shao-yi.

The Korean experience marked a distinct turning-point in Straight's life. It was now, if one may judge from his letters and diary, that he first was seized with a serious interest in the economic aspects of the Far Eastern situation, in the opportunities open to America for activity on a far greater scale than before.

He saw that the United States was the only important nation in the world that had not engaged in the scramble for "spheres of influence". Being the only one whose motives were not under suspicion, it alone was qualified to take the leadership in realizing John Hay's ideal of the Open Door. This was clear to many students of Far Eastern politics, but it was to be Straight, through his negotiations with the Chinese at Mukden, who was to make the first practical attempt to turn the Open Door from a phrase into a fact. There is no reason to suppose, however, that his thoughts had approached a definite plan when he was Minister Morgan's secretary. Before he got so far as that, Japan's coup had caused the withdrawal of all foreign envoys from Korea. Straight sailed for home early in 1906 and a little while later joined Mr. Morgan as his secretary in the Legation at Havana.

KOREA SIGNS AWAY HER FREEDOM

Chapter V
CONSUL-GENERAL AT MUKDEN

RUSSIAN TYPES IN MANCHURIA

IN 1906, a year after the close of the Russo-Japanese War, Willard Straight went to Mukden as American consul-general. This city, the capital of Manchuria, was then the storm-center of the Far East. Russia in the north of Manchuria, and Japan in the south, were in process of swallowing this rich territory, much as Japan had absorbed Korea. Straight was twenty-six years old, afire with enthusiasm and confidence, and determined not to limit himself to the traditional routine of a consular representative. Circumstances favored this ambition; for Mukden was a fighting-ground, not only for the maintenance of Chinese sovereignty, but also for the protection of American rights. The difficulty of quick communication with the nearest American envoy, the tenseness of the international political situation and the desire of the State Department to get prompt and frequent information, gave the post peculiar independence and importance. Officially a consul, Straight became in truth a diplomatic agent.

Though surrounded by problems of the gravest nature, Straight made the obtaining of quarters for the Consulate the work of first importance. The United States government had not provided funds for a proper building. Straight knew his East too well not to realize the effect an unsuitable house would have upon the oriental mind. All the high-mindedness and generous purpose under the sun would avail nothing if viceroys and governors and their underlings, passing by, saw the American flag flying over a mean and ugly dwelling.

Eager to start on his real task, Straight was exasperated by having to plead and argue about something that should have been disposed of at once as a mere detail. And, being without means, he was seriously worried by having to meet official needs out of his own purse.

"If I had the money, all this would be done without a whimper," he wrote a friend in Washington, "but I haven't, and I tell you it sometimes well-nigh drives me mad. Of course I will stick it out — the work is absorbingly interesting, and the game fascinates — but sometimes it looks as if the breaking point is at hand.

"I should hate to feel that I must chuck it, for it was a tremendous stroke of luck to be sent here. On the other hand, there is so much bitterness in wondering how to pay the servants, how to meet one's insurance, how to pay the grocer's bill, that it does not seem worth while. I have cut down as much as I can. I can't let the compounds be filthy for lack of men to clean them. Yet I have to spend my funds for telegrams to Washington, for a flagstaff, for repairs, for heating — all things that are for the efficiency of the office, not for my personal comfort. Today the three governors of the Manchurian provinces meet in conference, the consular body will entertain, and, as senior consul, I should give a dinner. I know I ought to, I feel that I must and yet I can't afford it. That done, means something necessary around the Consulate left undone.

"All this worries me so much that it interferes with my efficiency, try as I will to laugh it off and tell myself that better days will come. I am not afraid of work, and fighting I love and I am quite prepared to sacrifice if there be cause. But this is no Valley Forge, not while Congress can raise its own salaries and build itself private offices, and I can't help resenting it—this outposting and beggary combined."

After months of correspondence, Straight was finally directed by a superior, as he jubilantly wrote to his friend, "to do what I 'damn please'. And I 'damn please' to fix up the temple I told you about."

Yet he came near to losing his temple after all.

"It had been given up by the Japanese commander, and upon my return from Peking I made for it. When we talked to Watanabe, the commander, he asked Arnell of our office: 'Well, what about that San Francisco matter?' Arnell told him it was all newspaper talk, fomented by Germans who were anxious to profit by the estrangement of two such time-honored friends. This seemed to satisfy the warrior. We thereupon opened up negotiations with the Chinese owners. In the meantime, one Nikitine, the Russian vice-consul, appeared. Unwarily I told him that I hoped to get a temple. He promptly went after one for himself, and with characteristic disregard for meum and tuum attempted to inveigle the lamas into signing a

IN FRONT OF THE RUSSIAN CONSULATE

contract for mine. He could then have wired his Minister that all was arranged and could have laughed at me. I should have spanked him, driven his folks out of the place, or never let them in, and told him to go to war. But he weakly budged a little and told me he was afraid there had been some mistake. I answered that there certainly had been, and that the temple was, and would continue to be, mine. So it seems settled, and, when you come out for a visit this summer, you will sleep under painted beams, with gilt dragons looking down at you from a parti-colored ceiling."

It was at Mukden that Straight made the illustrations for J. O. P. Bland's book, *Houseboat Days in China*. In a letter Bland has told of a visit he paid to his collaborator in the spring of 1907, soon after Straight had moved into his new quarters.

"The Consulate-General was the ancestral hall of old I-ko-tang-a. It was a picturesque and a very fitting place for a Consul with the aspirations of a knight-errant and the dreams of an artist, this Manchu's ancient home, with the huge memorial tablets on their stone turtles' backs, lying in the central courtyard just as the masons had left them, unfinished, when the vanguard of the Japanese army entered the city and their General made this his headquarters.

"I arrived by night. The May moon was shining in a cloudless sky. The courtyard where we sat, talking of love and war, of wisdom and folly, far into the wee sma' hours, was all silver splendor and mysterious shadow.

"Next morning we went to a lama temple close by to see the annual festival of the Devil Dance, a solemn rite, which, as the head priest explained, ensures peace and prosperity to the whole Empire. (Subsequent events proved that there must have been some flaw in the ritual.) To the American Consul-General and his guests were given the seats of honor, next to the aged Chinese military mandarin who presided over the proceedings. Willard whiled away the time by making little sketches of the performers, to the great delight of the host.

"In the afternoon we walked out to the Imperial Tomb, across the plain where the great ten days' battle had been fought between the Russians and the Japanese two years before, now a beautiful stretch of turf. Passing through a lovely wood, a very paradise of birds, where hawthorn and honeysuckle and lilies of the valley were in full bloom, we came to the grove of firs that surrounds the sacred tomb, and sipped pale tea with the old Wen Tajen, the placid guardian of that peaceful resting-place, a philosophical soul with whom Straight loved to talk. Then home again, as the sun was setting, to dinner and Willard's guitar beneath the glimpses of the moon. Finally much talk of pictures he was then busy on sketches for our book and of contemporary art.

"Next morning came a deputation of priests, politely returning our 'call' of the day before, all in their ceremonial robes, very dignified and courteous, yet filled with irrepressible curiosity concerning the strange works and ways of the white man's home. Straight handled them with all the tactful kindness of an affectionate kindergarten teacher. That evening I took the long Siberian trail for London and he came a little way with me, as the oriental custom is, on the road to Mong Chia-Tun. I remember that, at the railway station where he left me, a Japanese policeman came up and, fussily important, asked us in fairly good Chinese where we were going.

" 'To the North,' said Willard genially. Whereupon the guardian of Japan's special interests glared in offended dignity. 'Do you know my business?' he asked. 'I am a Japanese policeman.' 'Very glad to meet you,' Willard replied, 'but this happens to be China, not Japan.' Another angry glare, and the policeman said, 'Oh, no, this is Manchuria.' ''Tis a true word,' said Willard, laughing. Before the train started, they had waxed friendly, and, when I left, they were discussing the political situation."

All manner of gatherings, serious and gay, were held at the Consulate. On the morning the flag was first raised over the building, the American residents of Mukden were invited to attend and, when the Stars and Stripes reached the top of the staff, a salute was fired with Chinese bombs. An amusing delusion among the lower class of Chinese was that the height of the pole—it happened by pure

A DEVIL DANCER

chance to be fifteen feet higher than any other in the city gave the American Consul-General precedence among all foreigners in Mukden. When they were told that the height of the flagstaff meant nothing, they shook their heads and smiled—they knew better.

One exceptionally merry occasion that the inhabitants of Mukden still recall was a Christmas dinner. The main room of the Consulate was transformed into a miniature pine forest. Colored lanterns were scattered through the foliage. The floor was strewn with cotton wool and pine needles. Flags of all nations drooped from the ceiling. Cloth-and-paper rabbits and bears and wolves, fashioned and painted by the Consul-General himself, were perched on the branches of the pines. All this served as a frame for a table heavily loaded with the best food that could be collected from the surrounding countryside. At each plate was laid a menu, decorated by the host with a sketch and a bit of nonsense verse. The city lay deep in snow, and the guests came from miles around in Peking carts—some of them in sleighs—drawn by mules with jingling bells.

Through such hospitality though most of the parties were not so elaborate as this Christmas dinner the old temple became known as the pleasantest of all places to visit. Not only Americans loved it, but Straight's new-made European and Asian friends delighted to frequent it. The Russian and the Japanese Consul, who, more than all others, were hostile to American enterprise in Manchuria, came along with the rest.

Thus Straight became as familiar a figure in social life at Mukden as he had been at Peking but with a difference.

There he had been an onlooker at the play of international politics and commerce; here he was one of the chief actors. There the serious side of the Far Eastern question had been incidental to dinners and teas and receptions and dances; here all social affairs were subservient to serious business. And the unique position of the United States, as the only disinterested nation where China was concerned, served to heighten his prestige and popularity. Not only was he the confidant of the Chinese; he became a trusted friend of the representatives of the nations striving most actively to thwart the ideal of the Open Door.

The friction between Chinese and Japanese was at its hottest in those days of Straight's sojourn in Mukden. His diary and letters convey the atmosphere of intrigue and suspicion hovering over Manchurian life.

"In the *Japan Mail* you have probably read that one Hsu Shih-chang [now president of China] was likely to come to Mukden. The Japanese are trying to oust Chao Erh-hsun, the present viceroy. On Sunday the Japanese celebrated the second anniversary of their triumphal entry into Mukden. For some reason Viceroy Chao attended. None of us, naturally, were invited. Hagiwara, the Japanese Consul-General, bitterly assailed the Russians and said that, while they were in Manchuria, China had been a weak thing in their hands, without power and without respect; that there were three classes who were thankful on this anniversary—the Japanese for their victory and the opening of new fields for their enterprise, the Chinese, whose sovereign rights had been restored through the good will of Japan, and the foreigners generally, who were assured of an open door in Manchuria.

"The Viceroy was very much put out and took exception to Hagiwara's statement, denied that China's sovereign power had ever been sacrificed, and then, followed by the entire official outfit, left the place. Hagiwara, so they say, was in a frightful stew and begged the Viceroy to remain. 'Not on your life,' said Mr. Chao, and climbed into his chariot. The best part of the whole story is that the Viceroy himself would never have had the nerve to do such a thing had he not been put up to it by one Tsao, a young fellow, product of a Methodist university in the United States, and now attached to the person of the Supreme One."

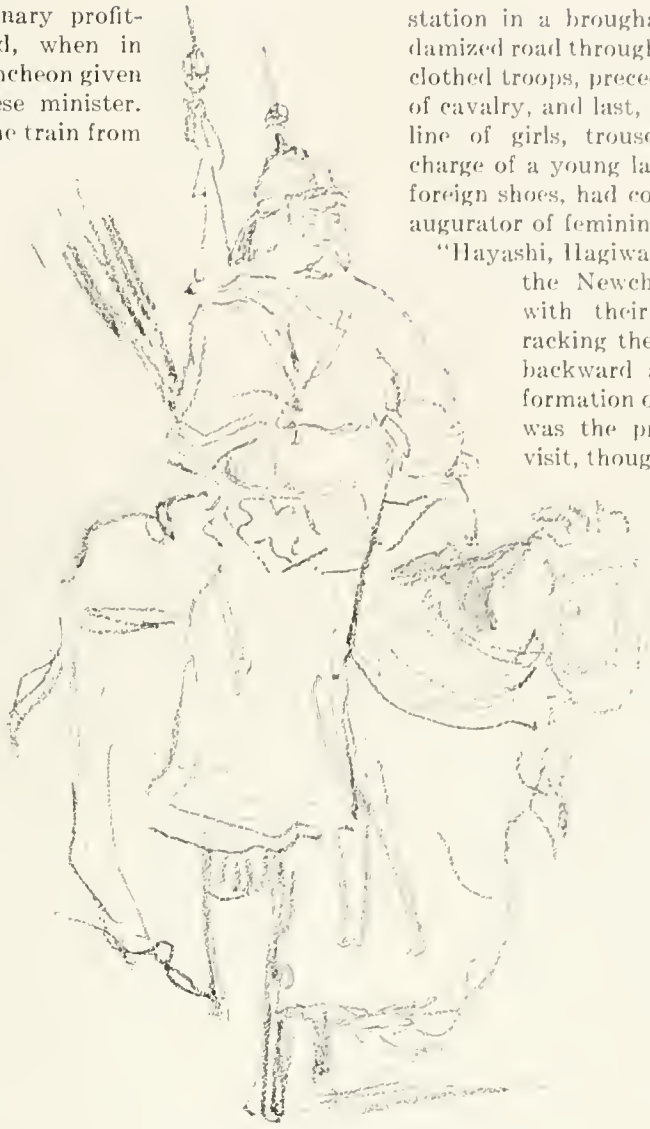
A CHINESE COMEDIAN

"The whole question of Manchurian administration is in an unsettled state. Chao, the present viceroy, has long been *persona non grata* to the Japanese, who have for months libeled him in their journals and, if rumor be correct, brought great pressure to bear at Peking to secure his removal. Early in February, it looked as if he would go. Yuan Shih-kai [viceroy of Chihli Province] was mentioned as his probable successor, but he of course would not accept such a post, and Hsu Shih-chang was all but ordered to take over the seals. Hsu was one of the imperial commissioners who visited Manchuria last autumn and has owed his rise in life to the influence of Yuan Shih-kai.

"Yuan has of late been playing much with the Japanese. He needs money, and one of the principal Japanese banks is willing to lend, when advisable, on terms which

would not appeal to the ordinary profit-seeking investor. I happened, when in Tientsin recently, to attend a luncheon given Yuan by Hayashi, the Japanese minister. I had come down with him on the train from Peking. Why he asked me I cannot say, for I was the only white man present. Yuan, who impressed me tremendously, was accompanied by the Customs Taotai and one other official, and besides Hayashi, there were the three principal Yokohama Specie Bank managers in North China, the Japanese Consul-General and a flock of interpreters. Most of the Japanese present were highly incensed at my appearance on the scene, and Hayashi rather seemed to enjoy their discomfort, having probably brought me in as a sort of political gooseberry.

"I took occasion to make some inquiries as to what was going on behind the Viceregal scenery, and learned that several of the governors-general are in need of funds; they are afraid to acknowledge openly the necessity for floating a foreign loan, and wish to make their arrangements quietly. The British and Chinese Corporation as well as the French and German syndicates have been approached, but have not been satisfied with the security offered. The Japanese bank, however, is stepping merrily into the breach.



AN ACTOR IN THE ROLE OF GENERAL

"To go back to Yuan. As you doubtless know, he won the enmity of the Emperor some years ago and, for his position, has depended upon the Dowager. That lady is not only wicked but old. Her days are numbered, and, like his illustrious predecessor, Li Hung-chang, who threw in his lot with the Russians to save his own skin, Yuan is now looking about for external support to serve him in the day of need that seems to be fast approaching. The Japanese are obviously heaven-sent—and Yuan has undoubtedly thrown in his lot with them—to save his skin."

Hsu Shih-chang was appointed viceroy. With him came Tang Shao-yi, to be governor of the province of Shengking, in which lies Mukden. Tang was a graduate of Columbia University, and well versed in world politics. Shortly after the installation of these two men, Straight wrote:

"At Mukden there have been great changes. Hsu and Tang arrived with a flourish of trumpets and the old man Chao went away, glad to be rid of the difficulties of his post, I surmise, and looking forward, with a sigh of relief, to the French in Szechuan. He had a fine send-off, and it must have given him great satisfaction to ride to the station in a brougham over an excellent macadamized road through lines of well-set-up and well-clothed troops, preceded by an excellent squadron of cavalry, and last, but not least, of all to pass a line of girls, trousered in light blue, who, in charge of a young lady in black alpaca skirt and foreign shoes, had come to bid farewell to the inaugurator of feminine education in Manchuria.

"Hayashi, Hagiwara, Kawakami of Harbin and the Newchwang men have been here with their heads together—doubtless racking their brains for the benefit of a backward and untutored China! The formation of the Yalu Lumber Company was the principal object of Hayashi's visit, though I imagine that he wished to come up here on the heels of the new administration, much as the prospective owner of a mansion would wish to supervise the installation of a temporary occupant thereof. He lunched with me one day and talked very freely, outlining what he wished known as Japan's policy in Manchuria and voicing views that he apparently wished me to transmit to Washington. With comments and side notes this has been done—to his satisfaction, I hope."

In the following passage in his diary Straight acknowledges, with satisfaction, that he had erred in foretelling that Hsu and Tang would be the willing tools of the Japanese.

"Tang and Hsu have been here now for well-nigh three months and, while it is true that they have done comparatively little constructive work, they have managed to balk the Japanese to a very considerable extent without irritating and worrying them after the manner of Chao Erh-hsun. . . . For a long time I was afraid that the new administration would play into Japanese hands, particularly since, in addition to Yuan's alleged connections, Chao Erh-hsun was undoubtedly ousted from this post by Japanese intrigue and as a concession to Japanese wishes. Tang and Hsu, however, while they have on all occasions shown themselves anxious to adopt a most conciliatory attitude, have yielded but little. They have been most pleasant, have dined and wined and smoothed the Japanese—tactics which Chao had never mastered—and have steadfastly refused to give way on any of the points at issue."

"Here in Mukden we have had much ado about the visit of Baron Oshima, governor of Kuangtung. There were numerous festivities, enlivened by rather amusing, if tragic, incidents. A huge dinner given by Tang and Hsu, in the hall of the new commercial exhibition building,

WILLARD STRAIGHT IN THE COURTYARD OF THE CONSULATE AT MUKDEN, WITH GEORGE D. MARVIN, VICE-CONSUL-GENERAL (RIGHT)

was as well done as anything could be. Cooks, boys, service, food, wine were all brought from the Astor House in Tientsin. Over a hundred people were present. The Viceroy's band played excellent music in the courtyard, which was garnished with potted shrubs and illuminated by countless parti-colored lanterns.

"Hsu made a speech, which was translated into Japanese. Oshima made one, which was translated into Chinese. Hsu laid particular stress on the international character of the gathering, addressing his remarks to us all in a rather marked way, and not by any means dwelling upon the happy augury of Oshima's presence. Oshima took his cue from Hsu and talked about the 'Open Door', and how pleased he was to meet us all. At the suggestion of the Russian and the German, who resented the fact that neither of the principal speeches had been translated into a western language, I stood up and addressed the multitude on behalf of my colleagues. I did so particularly because I was determined that the occasion should not, as the Japanese might have wished, be a Chino-Japanese love-feast with the rest of us on the side-lines. I put it into Chinese myself and thereby made quite good — particularly with the foreigners, who didn't understand how bad my Chinese was." Probably no other incident so well illustrates the confidence and poise of Willard Straight — a youth of twenty-six, speaking for the western world in a setting of ancient, viceregal dignity.

"At Hagiwara's there was quite a different tone. Oshima proposed the health of the Emperor of China, the Chinese in a rather perfunctory manner responded with a toast to the Mikado, more speeches were made, and the band played. The Japanese, as I had imagined, were trying as far as possible to play up to the Chinese and show to us that their interests were the greater, and that in Manchuria it was China and Japan together. Hsu and Tang, however, did not on this occasion warm up very perceptibly."

Straight was zealous in upholding his country's prestige, for he knew how much outward dignity counted in this part of the world — knew that a failure to maintain it in small things might have disastrous consequences. Some rude tests were forced upon him, and he met them with spirit. The news of his championing of his Chinese servants against a Japanese postman who attacked them leaked out and was heralded all through the East. His triumph, trivial though the affair itself was, inspired respect in the minds of men to whom Open Door manifestoes and such diplomatic utterances were naught but meaningless words. Straight narrated the incident in a letter home.

The way in which the affair was described in the press flabbergasted Straight. He had narrated it in a humorous and exaggerated vein, in a personal letter to a friend, and the friend, over-enthusiastic, made a newspaper yarn of it. It not only embarrassed Straight in his relations with the Japanese Consul at Mukden, but it failed to make plain that his picture of himself in the rôle of a swashbuckler with pistols was a bit of the comic-opera satire in which he so delighted. The letter, which was meant only for his friend, was as follows:

"Mr. Japanese Postman, who was apparently new on the beat, elected to come through the wrong gate to deliver letters and started to force his way in. Liu, the

office coolie, objected and told him where he should go. My attention was attracted by one large noise and the scene of Liu and postman mixed. I rushed out, separated the doughty combatants and demanded explanations.

"The postman wished to lick Liu first. Liu was equally anxious to finish the postman. I dissuaded both, and, having ascertained the cause of the dispute, told the postman he was wrong, led him peacefully out through the main temple gate, then pointed to where Clarence stood with an interested smile and told him to deliver his letters there. This the postman understood, although the conversation was a strange hybrid tongue, medleyed English, Chinese and his own chatter. Then I told him to deliver the mail that he admitted he had. He said he would when he had delivered some Japanese letters. Seeing that he was rather piqued by his unceremonious exit, particularly when he had been interrupted in the midst of a scrap, I took the mail myself, returning to the office.

WILLARD STRAIGHT FOUND THE OLD CONSULATE AT MUKDEN UNSUITABLE HEADQUARTERS FOR A GREAT NATION

"When I had hardly sat me down with the official bunch of documents and half sorted them for perusal, Clarence, pop-eyed, and Liu, disheveled and half-weeping, rushed in and informed me that the Japanese were storming the front courtyard. I rushed out. The water-coolie, Chester, and one other were held pig-tail-tight by one brute standing just outside the gate. Tang, his tail gripped tightly by another swine, was being dragged past the gate-house. Liu, who was behind, was immediately seized upon. There were half a dozen Japanese blackguards beating and fighting about the entry-way, the postman presiding in a triumphant manner. I chucked one man out, told the others to get and demanded that the fellow with poor Chester and Company should let go his prey. He was insolent and not inclined to do so. Several Chinese police were present and wholly useless. They finally, however, released Chester and the others. At last I threw the postman, protesting about the sanctity of His Imperial Majesty's mail, into the gate-house with the rest. Four nice birds!

"I got a Mauser pistol, unloaded, of course, and displayed it prominently, and my small S. & W., which won't even pull. This I put in my pocket with a great flourish, while the noise inside, admonished by the gent who was peeking through the door, quickly subsided. I had sent for Japanese police, but these not putting in an appearance, I saddled my steed, took two Chinese carts with a native policeman to each one, and placed the two Japanese inside thereof. The Chinese police were in a frightful funk the whole time, and the whistles, which, when we had our fire, brought them down like flies, failed to raise a soul. Disreputable Japanese from the neighborhood were flocking up all the time, however, and I rather wished that my guns, exposed to such plain view, were loaded. The exhibition apparently was quite enough; for there was not a peep from the multitude as we rode away, the Bandarchips inside crestfallen and trying to throw an awful bluff to hide their loss of face.

"We went into the Japanese Consulate, and I forced the faltering Chinese policeman to go into the very innermost compound with me in order to shame my captives the more. Kato, consul-general, had to be hauled out of bed, although it was half past twelve. He came in and I

STRAIGHT ESTABLISHED A NEW AMERICAN CONSULATE IN THE ANCESTRAL HALL OF I-KO-TANG-A

SCENE IN A CHINESE THEATRE

told my story very politely, treating the whole affair as rather a joke between us two superior beings, but insisting naturally that trespassing upon a consulate with a foreign flag flying overhead and dragging a foreign consul's servants into the highway were no light matter. Kato apparently agreed. I offered to make a written statement but he said, 'Oh, no, that isn't necessary.' That afternoon I received a note telling me that the story of the man was very different from mine, and asking me to make a written statement and submit a map of the Consulate.

"Not a word of apology, not a murmur of regret. It was simply a damned piece of insolence. I refused to give any statement, and said that if he wanted to know the location of the rows, he could damned well send his subordinates over to find out, ending up by pointing out the enormity of the offense. Language most diplomatic, I assure you, but, my dear fellah, coldly formal.

"Result: a most cordial note from Kato, who sent his man to investigate and politely inquired whether my servants or myself had seen the postman in my room, as Tang assured me he had been, and as I had told Kato he was. He also said that the postman swore that, when he had been quietly passing my premises, my servants had rushed out to attack him, and that three or four patriotic Japanese who happened by came to the assistance of their countryman in distress, etc., which was, of course, a most impudent statement and an entirely untrue one.

"Kato's last word was that regarding the postman's statements. I answered him that I did not believe it, as that made by my servants appeared much more probable, in that I could not otherwise account for the presence of half a dozen Japanese, armed with sticks, on my premises. I am now waiting and shall submit the whole thing to Peking and Washington, and you may lay a small wager that if Mr. Kato does not punish his people he will hear about it."

Not long after, Straight briefly chronicled the outcome.

"Postman got one month; accomplice eleven days; another fined; I received an apology and a promise that efforts would be made to prevent a repetition."

Straight's acquaintances saw most frequently his social side, but he was working with all the untiring energy that was in him. He was continually lamenting his lack of training in government service, and he set about making up by industry for this want of technical preparation. He pored over the records of Manchurian trade and development and went out into the country to learn for himself what were the possibilities in mining and agriculture and railroad construction. Not content with short trips, at last he decided to make a grand tour of Manchuria. This covered several weeks and took him to regions rarely penetrated by white men. Leaving the railroad and main water routes, he traveled in carts and small boats, and rode scores of miles on horseback. When he returned to Mukden, he had accumulated a vast store of information.

When Mr. Taft, then secretary of war, made his journey around the world, Straight prepared for him an exhaustive report upon conditions in Manchuria. This he presented when he went to Vladivostok, under orders from Washington, to meet the Secretary's party.

"Marvin and I," he writes enthusiastically, "made the trip to Vladivostok together and had a most remarkable experience. He wanted to see the Secretary about a scheme of his to make a trip through the Philippines under the auspices of the War Department, and I of course was much elated at having an opportunity to lay before him the chances for American activity in Manchuria. . . . I will not attempt to go into the superb chance that we have in Manchuria at the present time, for you know full well the advantageous position that the history of our intercourse (barring the Exclusion and the Canton-Hankow Railway incident) with China has given us. You know too the dread of Japanese aggression, which is very strong in the Chinese mind. But beyond that, Japan's hands are tied, I think, for the present. She is treading on thin ice. She has not by any means won for herself an unassailable position here, and it needs only a strong hand with large funds and the approval of the American government, to direct the growth that the Chinese are more than anxious to foster.

"I talked with Mr. Taft about Manchuria. He was pleased to hear of the reception accorded the Shanghai speech and asked many questions about present conditions. He repeated many remarks of the day before and apparently had a pretty thorough grasp of Chinese af-

fairs. He was glad to hear of the prohibition of opium. He spoke of a certain physician in Washington who had come to him from the President's doctor with a splendid cure for the opium habit. Then I suggested Tang's loan scheme. It appealed to Mr. Taft, but he didn't seem very optimistic over the chance of obtaining funds at the present time, nor sanguine of the ability of the Administration to interest financiers. We reached Harbin at four. There was a Russian guard as well as Chinese troops, who tooted as we drew in. Taft drove to the Grand Hotel, where Fisher had prepared a lunch. Here, owing to complications between Russians and Chinese, Fisher asked me to propose all toasts. There was no time to make any other arrangement; so I proceeded, toasting first the President, then the Empress of China, the Czar, the Mikado, the President of France and the Taft party. Mr. Taft asked me if we wanted him to speak, and, as I replied in the affirmative, he made a few tactful remarks about the railroad and the enterprise of China and Russia in building the line. I put the remarks into Chinese for the Taotai, who was much pleased. The next morning, the Cossack Guard took the party to the station and then withdrew. None of the Russians came down. They were all offended apparently by the placing of the Empress of China's health before the Czar's. As I think it over now, the whole thing might have been avoided by not proposing the health of any sovereign, but merely toasting Taft and the railroad."

Men who served at the Consulate, accustomed to the easy hours consuls usually keep, regarded Straight's habits as proof beyond all question that he was indeed green in the government service. His clerk was an Oriental known as Mr. Kao. One night after midnight, when the mercury was at 30° below zero and a snowstorm was raging, Kao suddenly waked up and remembered that he had left the safe-key in the office. Shivering, he climbed out of bed, put on his clothes and went to get it.

"What do you think!" Kao exclaimed to a Scandinavian friend, Juul Blix, next morning. "I went to find my key, which I had forgotten, and, when I stepped inside the office, at half past twelve o'clock, I found the chief hitting away at the typewriter, puffing his pipe and looking as happy as if at a feast. It is a queer Consul, Mr. Blix, who works sixteen hours every day—a very queer man!"

This same Juul Blix, who was an assistant in the Chinese Postal Service, has related the incident of the fire at the house where Straight first lived in Mukden.

"When I arrived on the scene, the Consul-General, in shirt-sleeves and Russian top-boots, stood at the top of a ladder, emptying the buckets as they came along. All of a sudden there was a cry for help from a Manchu policeman. As he sat across the main beam, the roof at his back and in front of him gave way. All of us looked on in horror, thinking to see him disappear the next minute into the fire below. Straight jumped to the ground, got a second ladder, carried it up and laid it so that it reached from the top of his own ladder to the beam. Then he crawled along it, and led the policeman to safety.

"Early next morning—it was frightfully cold, I remember I met Straight on horseback, just outside the city wall. He was bandaged, and I thought he had probably been to the doctor's, but later in the day I learned he had ridden out to a village ten miles from Mukden, where the Manchu policeman lived, to ask how he was getting on. It was so through all the years I knew him: he seemed always to be trying to do kindnesses for people—give them things they needed, help them out of difficulties, encourage them when they were homesick and depressed."

A PASSENGER ON THE TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILWAY

Straight believed that the only answer to the Chinese question lay in the internationalization of foreign interests. This result could be attained only through Amer-

A SIBERIAN PEASANT TYPE

WILLARD STRAIGHT AND THE "INTENDANT OF THE EASTERN MARCHES"

Willard Straight Met the Chinese in the Way They Love, as Man to Man and Friend to Friend. The Real Chinese Have a Decided Sense of Humor and They Met Him Halfway

ica's lead, and he saw in the unsettled state of Manchuria, which called for powerful and disinterested aid, an opportunity for America. Tang Shao-yi shared this vision.

"Our own relations with Tang," Straight wrote, "have been most cordial. He has been, in fact, noticeably friendly. He has asked me to secure for him two men to direct an agricultural college that he proposes to establish, and I know that he is particularly desirous of interesting American capital in this region. He would welcome an opportunity to float the loan now contemplated for the development of Manchuria in America. It seems too bad that with everything in our favor here we have no one who is interested enough in the situation to take the matter up. The more I see of Manchurian affairs the more am I convinced that we, the Americans, are favored above all others and that ours is the opportunity to befriend China in her time of need and to aid her in straightening out her affairs here. And mind, once we had established ourselves in Manchuria we should be in a position to work through Tang and Yuan, who is now in power at Peking, and do a tremendous work in furthering the Chinese Renaissance. The task, not of empire-building but of empire-shaping, could with proper handling be ours.

"The possibilities really stagger me sometimes when I grasp what they truly signify. It is a work that would require a lifetime, but what a great work it might be!

"It must be admitted that Manchuria is open today as it probably never would have been had the Russians retained control. The Open Door could be made really to exist, if we were willing to interest ourselves in Manchurian trade and insist that there be equality of opportunity. I do not believe that the Japanese are strong enough to carry on their imperialistic program in the face of our opposition. There has, in fact, been a noticeable change in their demeanor within the past few weeks. Their former Consul, who for fifteen months employed tactics that he had been wont to use in Seoul, was recently replaced by one Kato from Tientsin, a very mild-mannered person, and the different demands that the former Consul was pressing so earnestly have been shelved for the time being at least. The Chinese, who in many cases have only their own weakness, corruption and indecision to thank for their calamities, have recently been much more self-assertive, an attitude attributable in part, I think, to the coming of the Pacific Fleet and Secretary Taft's Shanghai speech, which frightened the Japanese as much as it encouraged their continental cousins."

Cynical old-timers in diplomacy and international strategy sniff at the idea of any motive but national self-interest in these affairs. But Straight's interest in the development of China sprang in the beginning from a simple human feeling of fondness for the Chinese. Ambition for his country and himself strongly impelled him, but that fondness was the beginning. He genuinely liked the people. When he talked with one of them he was not thinking, "I am a foreigner and you are a Chinese, let us consider the differences between us"; but rather, "Let's talk as man to man."

The Chinese felt that he liked them and trusted them, and instinctively they liked and trusted him in return. And he was in the unique position of having behind him a government as disinterested as he was. To say this is not necessarily to attribute any great virtue to the United States. Call it the result of our fortunate cir-

WILLARD STRAIGHT AND TANG SHAO-YI, THE GOVERNOR OF SHENGKING

Others in the Group Are Minister Rockhill, Dr. George Morrison, the Famous London "Times" Correspondent, Third from the Left, and George Marvin, Vice-Consul-General, Third from the Right

cumstances—an ample field for expansion at home—and let it go at that. The fact remains that America had no ulterior designs on China. All it wanted was equal treatment for all nations, with China reaping the benefit that would come to her from honest foreign investment and fair and open trading. The most enlightened Chinese, recognizing this fact, were anxious that America should, by becoming a direct participant, make the first definite move toward true internationalization.

The crucial point in the whole Manchurian situation was railroad control. The only important line in the country, the Chinese Eastern, was held by the Russians and the Japanese: the northern part of it, running south from Harbin, by the Russians; the southern part, running through Mukden (known as the South Manchurian line), by the Japanese. Chinese trade was openly discriminated against. It was plain that, until there should be a railroad controlled by China or, if under foreign financial control, then conducted with the Chinese interest always paramount—Manchuria could never be truly a part of China but would fall more and more under Japanese domination. So it was that there grew, out of the many talks between Straight and Tang, the proposal for a new line (afterwards called the Chinchou-Aigun line), which would run north from Chinchou through eastern Mongolia, giving China an independent connection with the Trans-Siberian and continuing on across northern Manchuria to Aigun on the River Amur. This plan was a gradual development, starting with the plan for the short British line from Hsinmintun to Fakumen in the Mukden region. At the same time they discussed a scheme for a bank with American capital, which should aid in developing agricultural and mining wealth.

Not only from his studies but also from his own observation during his long trip through the interior, Straight knew the agricultural resources of the country to be enormous. He inspired Tang Shao-yi with a determination to introduce modern farming methods into Manchuria. Tang established an experiment station and brought to it exports from an American agricultural college. The project was an educational one, of course, and, as such, it required years to bear fruit. In time much food would have come of it; but the Revolution threw the whole scheme into the discard.

At that time E. H. Harriman had already begun to weave a plan for a round-the-world Harriman transportation system. The Trans-Siberian Railway was to be made a part of it, either by the purchase of control or by a hard-and-fast traffic agreement, which would join this road at one end with a Harriman steamship line out of San Francisco. But Vladivostok was too far toward the arctic for a seaport terminus. A necessary link in the chain, therefore, was a railroad running south through Manchuria from a junction with the Trans-Siberian to an ice-free port. This Harriman might obtain in one of two ways: by constructing a new line, or by buying the existing Chinese Eastern from the Russians and the South Manchurian from the Japanese.

From the conversations they had had when Harriman visited Korea, Straight knew how keenly interested he was in the idea of Manchurian development by American capital. While, as Consul-General, he carried on discussions with the Viceroy and Tang Shao-yi, he looked to Harriman for action when the hour should be ripe. Later, on his return to America, Straight was to lay before the financier his own expanded vision of America's rôle in Manchuria and, as a result of the plan developed from their conferences, he was to go to Peking as representative of American finance in the Far East.

Chapter VI
FAR EASTERN FINANCE

THE impression that he made upon E. H. Harriman, when the railroad financier visited Korea in 1905, was directly responsible for Willard Straight's entrance into the financial affairs of the Far East. Harriman's imagination had been seized by the vision of an around-the-world Harriman transportation system, with the Trans-Siberian Railway a part of it. It was Harriman of all American financiers who first saw the opportunity for great American development in the Far East and backed his belief with hard personal work and large plans.

"The working out of the Eastern question interests me and there is much we can do to get it started on more direct and straightforward lines than heretofore," Harriman wrote Straight just before his death after four years of correspondence and relationship with Straight in Far Eastern affairs. And in a letter to another he thus recorded the reason for his interest. "These financial groups are very uncertain and shift and change with the signs of storm or calm. The development work appeals to me more than anything else. After we have determined what we will do, then we can arrange the financing, and how it shall be done and who shall profit by it."

"I understand," wrote Straight in a memorandum, "that the suggestion that Mr. Harriman make the journey of 1905 to the Orient came from the Japanese government, with whom he had established close relations by virtue of the assistance rendered by him and by Mr. Schiff in coöperation with Sir Ernest Cassel of London, in floating the last Japanese loan in New York and London. By reason of the Russian defeat, he believed it might be possible to make some arrangement for the acquisition of the Russian Trans-Siberian line. In July or early August, 1906, assisted by Mr. Lloyd Griscom, then American minister to Japan and Mr. H. W. Denison, an American attached as adviser to the Foreign Office, Mr. Harriman reached an understanding with Marquis Ito and Count Katsura, then the Japanese premier, under which Mr. Harriman was to furnish the capital for the reconstruction and operation of the South Manchuria Railway and for the development of various mining, timber and other enterprises along the line. These the Russians had extracted from the Chinese, and the Japanese in turn had taken from the Russians. The Japanese were to have a joint interest and political control in this undertaking. Mr. Harriman was assured there would be no hitch, but was advised that nothing definite could be done pending the result of Count Komura's negotiations with the Chinese government."

COOLIE OF PEKING

A year later Straight learned from Harriman that he had been informed through one of the leading Japanese financiers that the Chinese had not approved and the Japanese had determined to deal with the problem themselves.

"Mr. Harriman's project had not been definitely turned down, but it was obvious that no further progress could be expected," wrote Straight. "Prior to my departure for Mukden, in August, 1906, Mr. Harriman asked me to keep him advised as to railway developments in Manchuria. He was still determined if possible to obtain a foothold in that region to carry out his scheme. Ultimately the Japanese government arranged to obtain in London the funds with which to finance the construction of their South Manchuria road. The Japanese, much to the disappointment of British interests, expended the funds which they had obtained in London in placing orders for railway material in the United States. In doing so, as I understand it, they were partly influenced by a desire to make up in some way for the failure to carry out their agreement with Mr. Harriman."

This decision by Japan to hold fast her claims in Manchuria marked the unfolding of her imperial plan in China. It also marked the beginning of a long and tedious, but obdurate fight, in which Straight played the leading active part—aimed to prevent Japan and Russia from closing in on Manchuria to the detriment of other national interests and Chinese sovereignty. The conclusion five years later of the contract between China and the Six Power Group—the United States, England, France and Germany with Japan and Russia admitted as partners—for joint loans to China, was the first great result of the fight. The Consortium of 1920 is the sequel.

The story of the fight begins in the summer of 1907, with Straight as consul-general at Mukden. The general aim was to establish an American economic foothold in Manchuria. The concrete aim was to build a railroad which, by paralleling the South

Manchuria Railway (Japanese) and its northern extension to Harbin (Russian), should nullify the strategic control over Manchuria held by Russia and Japan through their possession of this railroad link between the Trans-Siberian line and an ice-free port on the Gulf of Chihli.

"At that time," Straight wrote, "Lord ffrench, representing Pauling and Company [British contractors], and J. O. P. Bland, representing the British and Chinese Corporation, came to Mukden and secured from the Chinese government the right to build an extension of the Chinese Imperial Railways [the line from Peking to Mukden] from Hsinmintun, north to the town of Fakumen, 47 miles distant, with the ultimate right to extend this road to Tsitsihar [about 400 miles north] on the Trans-Siberian Railway. [This would have given a railroad connection from the Trans-Siberian line across Manchuria to the sea, quite independent of the Russo-Japanese line.] I was familiar with these negotiations. They seemed to offer an opportunity for the realization of Mr. Harriman's plans and for the creation of Anglo-American-Russian coöperation in Manchuria. This I believed to be essential, for I did not feel that the United States was sufficiently strong politically alone to undertake to counterbalance Japanese influence."

What the building of this British railroad as a parallel to the Japanese South Manchuria line might have meant politically may be judged from a significant statement recorded by Straight:

"After lunch, Goto's aide [Baron Goto, minister of Communications] came in. He said Japan would, if necessary, with weapons, prevent the construction of the Hsinmintun-Fakumen Railway."

The Japanese protested to the British, their allies, and the British Foreign Office withdrew its support from the scheme, which fell by the wayside. But Straight adapted it later to the plan he was working out, as providing the means for joint American-British action in Manchuria under American leadership.

"I had several discussions with the Viceroy [Hsu Shih-chang, now president of China] and Governor [Tang-Shao-yi]," Straight wrote, "and as a result drew up an outline of agreement, which would give to American interests the contract for a loan of some $20,000,000, carrying with it the right to establish a Manchurian bank to coöperate with the Manchurian government. This bank would be the financial agent of the Manchurian government in undertaking mining, timber and agricultural development and the construction of certain railways, among others the line from Tsitsihar running north to Aigun on the Amur River. This scheme I sent to Mr. Harriman in September, 1907. Early in October I received a cable stating that financial conditions in New York were such, brought on by the panic, that the transaction would be impossible."

A KOREAN

This plan put up to Harriman for backing was Straight's first important contribution to the solution of the Far Eastern problem through American action. He was convinced of Harriman's intention to put through a big idea and he knew that the panic of 1907 meant only a temporary delay. In the field, he continued to work in close contact with Tang Shao-yi and to keep the State Department and Mr. Harriman fully informed at home.

The relationship of these two men Straight, a mere untried youngster of twenty-seven, out on the field, and Harriman, the greatest railroad-financial genius of his generation, at home, each working with independent mind and vision, with strong confidence in the other and with assurance of America's ability to attain a place of great influence on the Asiatic continent was a dramatic one. The two stood out alone in the breadth of their vision and resourcefulness. All the time Straight in Manchuria, in touch with actual conditions, was working out plans and the diplomatic facilities for carrying them out, to be put up to Harriman. He was confident that, when the time was ripe, Harriman had the abiding interest and the nerve to put his power behind them. Harriman on the other hand relied with rare confidence on the observing power, vision and good judgment of Straight. So great was this confidence, that a year and a half later Harriman was making strong representation to the Taft Administration that Straight, who considered himself much too young for the post, should be made minister to China.

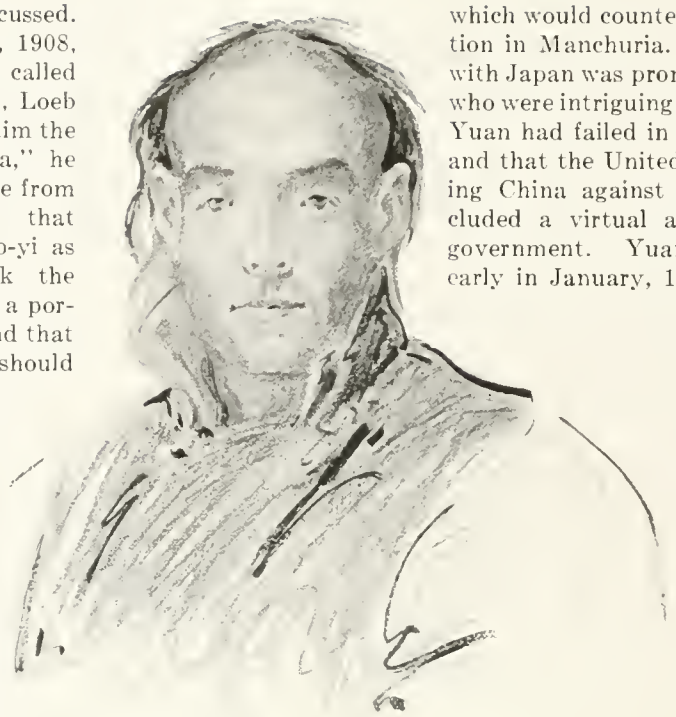
In 1908, almost a year from the time Straight first put up his proposition to Mr. Harriman, he was suddenly summoned by cable through the request of Mr. Harriman to return to the United States to discuss the Manchurian financing plans. Harriman had seen that conditions were right financially for reviving the Far Eastern loan. On the night before leaving Mukden—rather, at six in the morning Straight signed a memorandum of agreement for a $20,000,000 loan along the lines of the discussions of the year before, including a Manchurian railroad. This was a rough preliminary, not the detailed agreement, which it required two more years to get.

"I carried the agreement for nearly six weeks in a small wallet tied about my neck in a silk case," wrote Straight. "That memorandum was the groundwork upon which the American Group is based."

He was made acting chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs in the State Department soon after his arrival in Washington. He took up with Mr. Harriman immediately plans for com-

pleting the loan they had discussed.

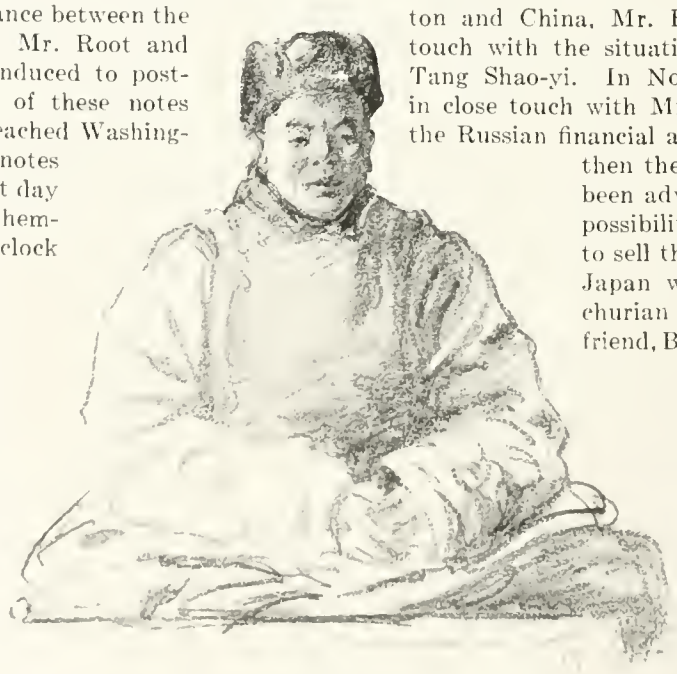
"On the third of December, 1908, by Mr. Harriman's direction, I called upon Mr. Otto Kahn of Kuhn, Loeb & Company and took up with him the question of the loan to China," he wrote. "Prior to my departure from Mukden it was determined that China was to send Tang Shao-yi as special ambassador to thank the United States for the return of a portion of the Boxer indemnity, and that on his arrival in America he should complete the negotiations for the loan the preliminary agreement for which I brought home with me. In the meantime, early in November, both the Empress Dowager and the Emperor Kuang Hsu died suddenly. At the end of October, moreover, Baron Takahira, who was then Japanese ambassador to Washington, had suggested to President Roosevelt and Mr. Root that, in order to prevent any difficulty between Japan and the United States in the Pacific, there should be an interchange of notes regarding the preservation of the Open Door in China, stipulating that both the United States and Japan should mutually respect the other's interest in the Far East.



A FINE CHINESE TYPE

"It seemed obvious that Japan was endeavoring to forestall the arrival of Tang Shao-yi and the attempt which it was believed he would make to reach some understanding with the United States, by making it appear through the interchange of such notes that there was a virtual alliance between the United States and Japan. Mr. Root and President Roosevelt were induced to postpone the actual signature of these notes until Tang's arrival. He reached Washington on November 30, the notes were shown him at noon that day by Mr. Root and the notes themselves were signed at four o'clock in the afternoon.

"Tang was very much discouraged. On the death of the Emperor Kuang Hsu, his nephew was named as his successor and his brother, Prince Chun, appointed Regent. The Regent hated Yuan Shih-kai and every effort was made to remove him from office. Yuan, however, was endeavoring to hold his position by claiming that, through Tang's negotiations in the United States, he would be able to secure American support, which would counterbalance Japanese domination in Manchuria. The interchange of notes with Japan was promptly used by the Japanese, who were intriguing against Yuan, to prove that Yuan had failed in securing American support and that the United States instead of supporting China against Japan had in reality concluded a virtual alliance with the Japanese government. Yuan was driven from power early in January, 1909, and Tang himself left the United States for London shortly afterward. He felt that any further discussion of the loan was useless. The loan negotiations were dropped for the time being."



A PEKINGESE IN WINTER

But they were dropped only from the Chinese end. The American negotiators were, if anything, more determined than ever to see things through. Mr. Harriman reverted to his original plan of 1905–1906 for the purchase of the Japanese and Russian lines in Manchuria. But during the subsequent conferences in the early part of 1909, a complementary and alternative scheme evolved. This was to secure from the Chinese a definite contract for the building of another railroad in Manchuria, which could be used as a lever to influence the sale of the Japanese and Russian lines or, failing in this, could be built as an alternative line. Straight tells of these developments as follows:

"While these events were taking place in Washington and China, Mr. Harriman had kept closely in touch with the situation and my discussions with Tang Shao-yi. In November, Mr. Schiff, who was in close touch with Mr. Gregory Wilenkin, formerly the Russian financial agent in the United States and then the Russian agent in Japan, had been advised that there was still some possibility that Russia would be willing to sell the Chinese-Eastern Railway, if Japan would agree to sell her Manchurian line. Mr. Schiff wrote to his friend, Baron Shibusawa, to ask whether the Japanese would be willing, in view of the previous memorandum of agreement with Mr. Harriman, to sell the South Manchuria Railway to American interests, provided the Russians would sell the Chinese Eastern.

"This proposition the Japanese turned down. Early in December, I prepared a memorandum as to the basis upon which these two lines might be

acquired. The matter had been taken up with Tang Shao-yi, who had said that China would be glad and would coöperate if we could organize an international syndicate to purchase both lines on behalf of China, thus anticipating the provision for repurchase of the lines contained in the original agreement of 1896 between China and Russia. This memorandum I believe formed the basis for the Knox neutralization proposals [for an international syndicate to buy out the Russian and Japanese railroad holdings in Manchuria]."

Here the situation becomes complicated by the introduction of discussion of another loan to enable American financial interests to take up participation in the building of the Hukuang Railways in South China. The State Department had been fighting for the right of American finance to enter this loan with the British, French and Germans. There were therefore three ideas moving concurrently in the minds of the Americans. First and immediately came the effort to purchase the Russian railroad in Manchuria. Secondly, there was the necessity for immediate action to enable the United States to take its place in the Hukuang loan. Thirdly, there was the fundamental plan in the minds of Harriman and Straight to obtain from the Chinese a Manchurian railway contract to make the American position secure, whether the Russians or the Japanese sold their railroad or not. This contract, later secured, was known as the Chinchou-Aigun plan. The negotiation of the contract was to be the first essential in the American position. But no contract with the Chinese could be official without a ratifying edict. And therefore the edict for this contract, told of later in the story, became the key to the whole American position. It was in the development of this idea for the Chinchou-Aigun Railway that Straight contributed his first big share in the team-work with Harriman and the group of American financiers now interested.

A MANCHU WOMAN

"Early in May, Kuhn, Loeb & Company decided to send a representative to China to endeavor to complete the loan negotiations which had been undertaken the previous year," Straight wrote. "Subsequently it became obvious that unless American financial interests were willing at once to enter the field, the right to participate with the British, French and German interests in the construction of the Hukuang Railways would be lost to the United States. At this time I was working very closely with Mr. Robert Bacon of J. P. Morgan & Company. That firm was also thinking of sending a representative to Peking, and, in order to secure coöperation between the American financial interests, and to secure as strong representation as possible, it was agreed in June to form the so-called American Group, consisting of J. P. Morgan & Company, Kuhn, Loeb & Company, the First National Bank and the National City Bank, and I was designated as their representative. The Group was finally organized early in June.

"Mr. Harriman sailed for Europe at the end of May and I followed at the end of June. In early July we had a conference in London regarding the Hukuang Railways without reaching any satisfactory understanding. Shortly after, I went to Bad Gastein where Mr. Harriman was then taking the Cure. I stayed two days with him and talked over the Far Eastern situation very fully.

"No one, I think, was familiar with Mr. Harriman's plans for his Manchurian railway and round-the-world transportation system. I doubt very much if Mr. Kahn knew the details and I am quite sure that none of the other interests of the American Group, in which Mr. Harriman also had a participation, were at all familiar with his ideas. While in Paris Mr. Harriman had arranged with Mr. X—— to go to Petersburg to discuss with the Minister of Finance the possible purchase of the Chinese Eastern Railway [the northern Manchuria line]. I was to endeavor to secure from the Chinese government the right to build a line from the Gulf of Chihli to run north to the Trans-Siberian Railway, possibly up to the Amur.

"Once an agreement had been reached with the Russians and the right for the construction of a north and south line secured from China, we would have been in position to negotiate with the Japanese. If they had been willing to make some arrangement regarding joint operation of the South Manchuria Railway, it would have been unnecessary to construct another north and south line. If they were unwilling to make such an agreement, the construction of another north and south line operating in conjunction with the Russian road would have placed them in a very embarrassing position in Manchuria.

"I reached Peking early in September and on October 2, with Pauling and Company, signed with the Viceroy of Manchuria an agreement for the construction of a line from Chinchou on the Gulf, to Aigun on the Amur, making the first step in Mr. Harriman's scheme. This line was to be financed in America, and to be constructed by Pauling and Company, who had the original concession from the Chinese government for the line from Hsinmintun to Fakumen. We hoped thus to have the advantage of securing Anglo-American coöperation.

"I had received word of Mr. Harriman's death on September 10. Returning to Peking from Mukden, I found a letter from Mr. Harriman, written on the way from Paris to Cherbourg, in which he told me that X—— had come back from Petersburg, where he had arranged

with Kokovtseff, the minister of Finance, that on his return to Russia from a trip which he was about to make to Vladivostok, he (Kokovtseff) would recommend the sale to American interests of the Chinese Eastern Railway. Mr. Kokovtseff in accordance with his promise did on his return make this recommendation.

"The arrangement had been made with Russia, the contract secured from the Chinese government, but the directing genius had gone. I cabled to New York, urging the group to get in touch with Mr. Harriman's secretary and familiarize themselves with his plans. I had previously urged that a representative be sent to Petersburg in order to negotiate with the Russians but this recommendation had been turned down. No one in New York knew precisely what Mr. Harriman had in mind; no one was capable of carrying through his scheme. The Group, I understand, advised the State Department of the arrangement which Mr. X—— had made. Shortly after, they cabled me, asking whether the Imperial Edict had been issued, ratifying my preliminary agreement with the Viceroy of Manchuria.

"I replied that from reliable sources I understood that the edict had been issued. [As a matter of fact, it had not, though a secret and vague conditional edict had.] Without cabling the Legation, which at that time was in charge of Fletcher [recently ambassador to Mexico], without waiting for confirmation from me, the State Department, on the basis of the report above mentioned, launched the neutralization proposals [the invitation sent to the Russian, Japanese, Chinese, British, French and German governments to join in an international arrangement to buy out the Russian and Japanese railroad possessions in Manchuria with an alternative proposition to join with the United States in building the Chinchou-Aigun Railway, the potential rival of the Russian-Japanese line].

"The scene had been set, but to carry through the plan it would have been necessary to conduct unofficial conversations with both Tokyo and Petersburg, to secure the approval of London and Paris and possibly of Berlin, and then, when all arrangements had been made, to make an official proposal. It would have been wiser, probably, in any case, to have left these negotiations in the hands of private individuals. The scheme was all right but it required delicate handling instead of blacksmith methods. In Russia, M. Izwolsky, the minister of Foreign Affairs, was a bitter enemy of Kokovtseff. Also he was anti-American. Izwolsky desired a closer understanding with Japan and Kokovtseff wished to work with American capital. By handling these neutralization proposals through diplomatic channels, the negotiations were placed in the hands of Izwolsky and not of Kokovtseff. Izwolsky used the whole scheme and the bogy of an American incited anti-Russian China, which he built upon it, and the manner in which it had been presented, to convince his colleagues in the government that the only protection against American intrigue was a rapprochement with Japan. He was successful. The proposals resulted in a rebuff to the United States, the nullification of all work which had been done by Mr. Harriman [in endeavoring to buy or internationalize the Russian and Japanese lines in Manchuria] and the signature of the Russo-Japanese agreement of July 4, 1910 [for mutual coöperation and protection of interests in this territory], which practically lost Manchuria and Mongolia to China."

Whatever declaration Russia and Japan had made in treaties and conventions, what these two did *not* want was the Open Door in Manchuria and they quickly came together to defeat it.

The story here goes back to the point of Straight's arrival in Peking the year before. Upon him, not yet thirty years old, acting with Henry Prather Fletcher, *Chargé* at the Legation, rested the duty of representing American interests in Peking in this, the greatest foreign development project that Americans had ever undertaken. Straight was pitted on one side against shrewd Chinese court favorites and officials—many of them grasping and corrupt—and on the other against European financial agents, who had received a profound schooling in oriental methods and European intrigues in years of residence in the East. True, supposedly, he was to coöperate with, not oppose, these Europeans. But they were suspicious of him as one who had come to trench upon their preserves. Nothing could be more eloquent of Straight's quality than the way in which, without yielding any American rights or advantages, he conquered their hostility—through tact and forbearance and good humor, not less than through sheer ability. Among the negotiators of the other group three stand out as men of kindred spirit and outlook with whom Straight formed a life-long friendship on terms of warm affection. They were Lord ffrench, who represented the British contractors, Pauling & Company, Bland, who represented the British and Chinese Corporation, and Casenave, who later represented the French Group, and is now French High Commissioner in the United States. And Straight's colleague in the union of diplomacy and finance who as *Chargé* at the Legation fought side by side with him was Fletcher, affectionately called by Straight, the Elder Brother.

During the fall of 1909 and the early winter—before the Knox neutralization proposals came out—there was one question which ran like a dominant motif through the official American community in Peking. This was, "When will the edict, ratifying the Manchurian agreement, relating to the Chinchou-Aigun Railway be issued?" Rumors, encouraging assurances, postponements, evasions, constituted an excellent specimen of Chinese governmental procedure. Fear of the Japanese and Russians was one powerful factor behind the Chinese delay.

"It is disgusting," wrote Straight, "to see the terror with which the high Chinese officials regard Japan and to realize that they would rather sacrifice their richest provinces than risk incurring Japanese displeasure."

In a letter of December 3, 1909, Straight discusses some of the reasons for the Chinese delay:

"We know there is a terrific row at the palace between the Regent and the widow of the late Emperor. Not only this worthy lady but the erstwhile concubines of the Emperor Tung Chih, defunct some forty years, are now taking an important hand in the game. The Number One Concubine wants honors as an Empress Dowager and there are other bereaved ladies in the palace who wish for further honorifics—to be called 'Emerald Eye', I suppose, instead of 'Sang de Bœuf'. The spectacle of these old women, sitting at the Imperial Tombs and declaring that they were so moved by the sight of their late lord's resting-place, which they had not visited since he was planted forty years ago, that they could not return to Peking unless they were given certain honors, is one

WILLARD STRAIGHT IN MANCHURIA

Straight Had Traveled from End to End of Manchuria During His Consulate at Mukden, Acquiring First-Hand Knowledge of the Country That Later Stood Him In Good Stead

that provokes our mirth but the Chinese misery. They came back the other day over a yellow road, dear things, for they refused to proceed over the ordinary dust of commerce. [Members of the Imperial Family could travel to and from the Imperial Tombs, more than 100 miles away, on nothing but an imperial yellow road, made so by the sprinkling of yellow dust or sand.]

"The Viceroy of Chihli, Tuan Fang, was cashiered through the influence of the Dowager and against the will of the Regent, and the whole place is so upset that it is difficult to know when we may expect these people to take up our matters. Tuan was dismissed ostensibly because he had had cinematograph pictures taken of the Empress Dowager's cortège, and had run telephone and telegraph wires within the sacred enclosure at the Eastern Tombs. More than that disreputable clod that he was he had allowed his sedan-chair to be carried across the Spirit Path (the road on which the Empress Dowager's funeral was to proceed to the tomb), thus holding up the whole parade! The real truth is that the party of the dead Empress Dowager is entirely disgusted with the time-serving policy of the Regent, and has compassed the downfall of Tuan to humble the Chief of State. It seems now not improbable that Yuan Shih-kai may come back. He will, if given a place on the Grand Council, but not without it."

The Knox neutralization proposals came out early in 1910 and immediately threw the Russians and Japanese into each other's arms. But though the Knox proposals forced the Russians and Japanese to refuse definitely to sell their railroad lines in Manchuria and furthermore aroused their intense opposition to the building of the Chinchou-Aigun Railway, Straight and Fletcher kept fighting for it with confident hope of success. And success they achieved in the final contract signed by the Chinese a few months later.

"Fletcher managed to extract the Chin-Ai Edict from the Chinese," wrote Straight, "on practically the same day that the Knox proposals were published, and Washington's face for the moment was saved—a little bit." But the final agreement for the loan still had to be drawn.

"Our whole play is to work China's fear of Russia and Japan to get our detailed agreement through," Straight wrote later, "then to take Japan and Russia out of the way. Had we done this first and then tried to put through our detailed agreement, the Chinese would have laughed at us.

"The Russians have put their foot down and the Chinese are in a blue funk. They will not move until forced into action by our government. Whether Washington can do more than it has done already to help this ungrateful, vacillating, weak-kneed lot of officials, I don't know. It could if they'd do even a little to help 'emselves."

"Fletcher and I threatened Korostovetz [Russian minister] the other day," wrote Straight on April 17, "that if he didn't get his government to allow our railway to go through without further protest, we'd jolly well have Pauling & Company and the Group open an office in Teheran and Constantinople and make a little trouble there. He was quite inclined to take us seriously.

"I saw that the Chinese were dilly-dallying and would continue to do so indefinitely if they were let. I saw that, once we had them under agreement, we could go no farther until we had either squared or defied Petersburg.

MAURICE CASENAVE

The last course we could only risk as a last resort. Furthermore, our only club to bring the Chinese to terms was a threat to leave them to the mercies of Japan and Russia. So when things were pretty well settled, I announced that I would leave for Russia and New York. If they closed before I went, I should negotiate on their behalf with the Russians; if not, I should return to New York and report that they were not seriously anxious to build a railway, but were only using us for political purposes." Straight wrote this on April 21.

"Before I left China in April," he wrote later, "we had completed our negotiation of the final agreement for the Chin-Ai line. The Russians and Japanese had entered protests at Peking. But we hoped to be able to reach some understanding with the Russians. To this end I went to Petersburg in June, 1910, and met the ministers interested. I came away convinced that if we started to build our line and told the Russians we would only go as far as Taonanfu for the time being, we would eventually be able to complete the work. This proposition however was turned down.

"The Chinese wished to know what the American government was going to do about it all. The Russians however had clearly stated that, though they couldn't stop our building the line and had no treaty rights on which to base their protest, they would jolly well take it out of China if she tried to cross their Trans-Siberian road at Tsitsihar, and approach the Siberian frontier. We ourselves couldn't fight. The Chinese would have gone ahead if we had promised to back them up, but this we could not do, and, had we pushed the matter, we should probably have gone off scot-free and seen China lose a slice of territory or two. Our government therefore sat down in front of the stone wall to the construction of which it had so largely contributed."

This conclusion of Straight's was set down long after the event but during this spring of 1910 hope of success for the Chin-Ai plan ran high. This hope was strongly encouraged by the belief that England, through its alliance with Japan and the influence it could surely exert, if it would, at St. Petersburg, would stand for the Open Door, particularly as British interests were directly involved. But instead, England herself yielded.

"It's not the Open Door but the Door Mat policy—and China pays," wrote Straight. "An intimation from Sir Edward Grey to Japan that interference with this project would be regarded as a serious breach of Japan's treaty obligations, and a hint that the London market might tighten against Japan as a result, would have chastened her at once. Had Downing Street firmly but politely told Russia that, if she continued to oppose China's legitimate development in Manchuria, it would be necessary for Great Britain to reconsider her position all along the line, Russia would have been careful. British weakness has been the signal for Russian and Japanese bullying."

The Chinchou-Aigun project was therefore practically dropped. But for Straight it only meant but one battle in the fight and he turned to other projects—the Currency loan and the Hukuang loan—to attain the same end.

Straight had come to Peking athrill at the prospect of setting in motion a vast development. The Manchurian loan and the Hukuang loan were matters immediately at hand. But he saw them as the beginning of a new era for China—the symbol and the promise of still greater things to be. Not bankers' profits but the sweep and bigness of the whole scheme—its meaning to the future of his country and to millions of men in Asia—stirred his imagination. Hence the atmosphere of distrust in which he found he had to work fell, at times, like a pall over his spirit.

"What bitterness there is in this China game!" he wrote in one of his letters home. "It is sickening sometimes. It is almost impossible for you to realize the pettiness and suspicion that prevail here, where every one more or less is spying on every one else. It is the storm center of world politics, and the foreign community is very small. We see each other nearly every day—there are but few outside influences and diversions—and this brings out the little meannesses of human nature.

"Because one man does not invite another to dinner, because A's wife doesn't call on B's, B curses A and blocks his business. A invites B to dinner and pumps him dry; and if B be weak or vain, the chances are that A will learn things B has no right to divulge. You are up against the game all the time; each party to it finds little respite; for even our distraction must be shared by the same fighting crowd, who carry the scrap with them to the dinner-table and the polo-field."

Though Manchurian development plans were the underlying feature of Straight's work in this winter of 1909–1910, the matter of American participation in the Three Power loan for the Hukuang Railways was of concurrent interest. But now a new undertaking supplanted both Hukuang and Chinchou-Aigun in the center of the stage. This was the Currency loan, for the reorganization of China's monetary system, a structure tottering insecurely upon a silver foundation.

Chapter VII
THE CHINESE CURRENCY LOAN

WHEN Tang Shao-yi journeyed to Washington as special envoy, in 1908, at the time he and Willard Straight were working out the Manchurian loan, one of his plans was to negotiate a loan of $300,000,000. Part of the proceeds was to be used in reforming China's chaotic currency system. Professor Jeremiah W. Jenks, summoned from America for the purpose, a number of years before, had presented a scheme for thorough revision. In 1910, this matter of currency reform was revived at Peking. Plentiful funds were needed. The Manchu Prince, Tsai Tao, on a visit to the United States, early in 1910, made a preliminary contract with the American Group of bankers for a $50,000,000 loan.

Willard Straight had come home at this time for conference, bringing with him the completed contract for Manchurian development and for the building of the Chinchou-Aigun Railway. When the Russian and Japanese protests held this up, however, the attention of the Americans was concentrated on the new Currency loan. The final working out of the Hukuang loan was a concomitant, though lesser, issue.

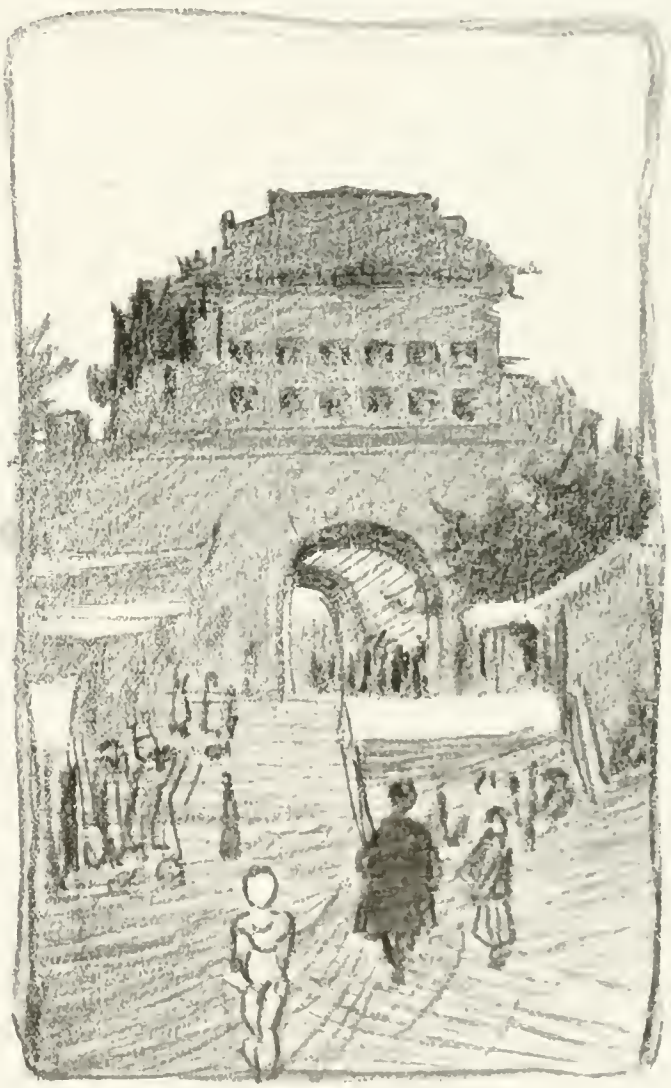
For the next year, 1910–1911, Straight, returning to Peking, gave himself up to the development of this most important chapter in American-Chinese finance. The year saw the hardest battling in the history of the undertaking. For the sole principles on the basis of which America can be of service to China in her financial reorganization were then fought out. It was Straight who bore the brunt of battle.

On one side were his European associates, bent on making loans that gave, in addition to fat profits, political advantages in claims on China. The Currency reform loan was at first anything but beloved by the British and German banking folk. Currency confusion was a source of considerable profit to foreign bankers in exchange. Thus some of the very men who presumably favored international coöperation were unsympathetic with this particular form and with Straight. On the other side were the Chinese, warily anxious to escape the toils of European political aggression, wanting money badly but on terms that set no limit to its corrupt expenditure. There were his own principals in New York—now lukewarm to this expensive and wearisome Far-Eastern dickering, which dragged on and on with only faint promise of immediate profit, but with ever deeper enmeshment in diplomatic tangle. The financial market in the United States then was a very different affair from that of today. Sizable foreign loans were practically unknown and unpopular with the investor, who distrusted any investment not under his own sight and who, besides, could get a higher return on his money in stock exchange securities. Last and often most irritating was the State Department at Washington, which, with an air of bland innocence, cabled to Peking instructions calculated to undo the work of months and set the pot of intrigue boiling again.

Straight, in conjunction with William J. Calhoun, American minister, Maurice Casenave, representative of the French bankers, and Henry P. Davison, who was confidently behind him in New York, successfully harmonized these elements. He supplied the energy, assurance and daring in independent action that gave his chief supporters among the bankers in New York, firm ground on which they could hold the Group behind his moves on the field. He achieved a working basis by virtue of unusual toil and resourcefulness, endless compromise, tact and humor—diplomatic talents of the highest order.

It was the year of his large achievement for American Far-Eastern relations, a year notable for the formulation of the two great principles on which the success of the present Consortium of 1920 depends. These are the principle of coöperation instead of competition among the lending Powers and of foreign supervision of the expenditure of loans to China, to prevent their dissipation in Chinese official pockets.

The Currency loan contract immediately gave large



A CITY GATE

NUMBER ONE BOY

prestige to the new position of the United States in Far Eastern finance. When the Chinese recognized that this country was in the mood to lend, they readily turned to it, for it had no covert political ambition. The fact that the Chinese came to the United States alone, asking this country to negotiate alone and to sign alone, gave the American group a powerful advantage over the others. It is difficult to estimate the influence in international finance possessed by the youthful Straight when he went back to Peking, in 1910, to work out America's tactical advantage over the European and oriental financiers and statesmen — shrewd, trained gray-heads and old hands — against whom he was pitted. He did not hesitate to take the lead; nor did he flaunt his advantage or lose sight of the weaknesses of his position. He never used power in ways that fanned the jealousy of his colleagues. Rather he won their confidence in his initiative and their respect for him as a business associate — but more, their friendship.

The Hukuang loan was the medium through which the principle of international coöperation was first definitely worked out. Many years before, a railway from Hankow south to Canton had been projected, and later the scheme had been expanded to include a line west from Hankow up the Yangtze valley. The word Hukuang was manufactured from the first syllables of the names of the provinces to be traversed by the road — Hupeh, Hunan and Kuangtung. In the spring of 1909 a combination of British, German and French bankers, with the diplomatic support of their governments, concluded an agreement with the Chinese for the financing and construction of the railway. The American government entered a vigorous protest against being excluded. Inasmuch as the Chinese seemed to ignore this, President Taft sent a personal cablegram to the Prince Regent of China, reminding him of previous engagements that gave America the right to participation. The Regent ordered the agreement to be redrawn to admit American capital. Thus the principle of American participation was settled.

The Hukuang negotiations had proceeded satisfactorily, considering the delays "because our British and German friends, having been forced to agree to our entry on a basis of financial equality, tried to prevent our protecting ourselves from discrimination against our railway material"; and, when Straight was in Europe in May, 1910, on his way home, the representatives of the four groups, American, British, French and German, signed an agreement covering the terms of participation. The late J. P. Morgan attended some of these conferences. "It was fine, because Mr. Morgan really took an interest in things—like an indulgent parent," wrote Straight with enthusiasm. A preliminary understanding was also arranged in Europe, in 1910, for participation by the European group with the American bankers in the issuance of the Currency loan when completed, with a reservation by the American bankers of the right of independent action if the Chinese objected to participation by the others.

This understanding made the position of the American Group in the Currency loan somewhat anomalous. It was the apparent lender to China; yet Straight felt that it would have to farm out a large part of the loan in Europe. And this troubled him. On his way back to Peking, in the fall of 1910, he wrote:

"History: The Chinese bring us the Currency loan on the understanding that we are to be the sole negotiators. On that basis we accept, though for some weeks we have been conferring with the European groups about a general quadruple understanding. We inform the Chinese we may wish to issue the Currency loan in Europe, to which they make no objection — their sole request being that we negotiate and sign alone.

YOUNG CHINA

"Hence our position, though delicate, is all right, and straight. Then, before we sign our preliminary agreement with China, we propose that Europe — when we cannot issue in the United States — issue for us on commission. This is of course a tactical error, for it shows that we have no absorbing power in America. But the European banks say all right, and we close up our preliminary agreement. It is published, or rather announced, in the press. Then comes the announcement that the American government will insist upon the appointment of a financial adviser.

"We engage in negotiations for a quadruple agreement — we show Europe that we can't handle what we get from China and that we expect to unload

three-fourths, perhaps four-fourths, in London, Paris and Berlin—and then Europe learns that there's to be an American financial adviser! Their bankers and governments both say: 'Why should we lend money to China to enable America to have a financial adviser? Especially since the American currency system is thoroughly bad?' Can you blame them?"

Straight arrived in Peking in November. "Wonderful to see, the arrival at the station!" he wrote. "A horde of servants and a number of Americans. A great arch of fire-crackers with a placard, 'Welcome Home(!) to Mr. Straight', hanging therefrom. Then, at home, the courtyard decorated with plants, red lanterns at the gate, a floral arch over the little gateway, and every one, foreigners and Chinese, apparently glad to see me."

The new American Minister, William J. Calhoun, was at the Legation. "He is a corker," said Straight, "sound, clear-headed and absolutely straight and fearless. And he has a nice line of profanity which I greatly appreciate, for I am always much handicapped when I cannot call on my own rather elaborate vocabulary for choice ones." Their friendship developed into warm affection and they worked closely together. Their joint despair over the State Department's offhand omniscience and sometimes over what seemed to Straight its incredible naïveté, was reflected in Straight's letters. After weeks of trying negotiation and cabling, he wrote:

"This morning a long telegram from Washington, which said: 'What grounds have you for believing Russia and Japan have intrigued against the Currency loan? Sift these reports and report what explanations, if any, are made by the Russian and the Japanese ministers!' Good Heavens! Imagine going to Korostovetz and Honda and saying, 'Prithee, gentle strangers, have you perchance done aught to interfere with our altruistic plan to reform China's currency?' 'Tush, tush,' they would reply, slapping the inquirer on the wrist, 'Naughty! Naughty! How could you have thought such a thing!' The Department's fine! Does it think we are playing kindergarten games, instead of gambling for an empire!"

"I'll bet the Banderlog [Banderlog, borrowed from Kipling, was the nickname for the Japanese, current among the Europeans and Americans in those days] was backing Lung Yu [the Empress Dowager] and Company," wrote Straight in one letter; "and it would be like 'em to create such a palace rumpus that they would 'bust' our loan, either as an American or an international deal; for, if it ever goes through, it means a set-back for the Japanese game of disruption and insidious corruption of the Chinese body politic. The Japanese will move heaven and earth to make trouble; for they realize that, if China can put through her currency reform and the four nations have strong investments here, China will be in a fair way to get on her feet. And that, above all else, Japan does not wish. In the meantime the Chinese play ostrich and argue with us on face-saving clauses."

The Russians vied with the Japanese in maneuvers against the integrity of the Chinese Empire. During the winter of 1910–1911, the pneumonic plague swept over Manchuria with ghastly results. It produced a fearful funk in some of the nervous foreign ministers in Peking, notably the German. The Russians immediately took political advantage of it in a move to occupy Chinese territory along the Siberian border. Their excuse was so far-fetched as to be comical.

LORD FFRENCH

"Korostovetz had stated," wrote Straight, "that the plague was spreading rapidly through northern Manchuria; that the Chinese were doing nothing to cope with it; that Russia feared that, unless she took proper steps, it might get into her Far Eastern provinces, and thence through Siberia into Europe; that the Amur and Angara (border streams) were frozen and that the Chinese were trooping across the ice; that Russia did not have enough troops to guard her frontier; and that the only alternative course would be for Russia to station troops in the principal Chinese centers in the north, whence the coolies could be prevented from going into Russian territory. He hoped that his colleagues, the other ministers, would back him up in the demand that he intended to make at the Foreign Office, that China should permit Russia to take such steps as she saw fit. Russia's purpose, he assured them, was humanitarian, not political in the least.

"When Calhoun told me this I howled. Then I explained the lay of the land along these rivers—the fact that there was but one Chinese town worthy of the name, that the country was practically a wilderness, save for the settlements on the Russian side, and that the stories about coolies crossing the ice were a pack of lies and the whole argument specious. It seems that, when he made the proposition, the diplomatic body looked at one another aghast. Then the German suggested that, before any action were taken, Jordan, the dean of the corps, should go with the Russian envoy to the Foreign Office and see if something couldn't be done.

"I pointed out to Calhoun that this was all a move in the Russian game; that I had noticed for some days vague hints, in the telegrams from Europe, that Russia was irritated by Chinese failure to meet Russia in a 'fair-minded' way (i.e., with pockets turned inside out and

GATHERED TO DISCUSS THE CURRENCY LOAN

In This Group Are Representatives of the Chinese Government, of the Legations of France, Germany and the United States and of Foreign Banking Interests. Dr. W. W. Yen, Educated in the United States, Now Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Is Seated at the Extreme Left of the Picture

hands up) in the discussion for revising certain treaties. All this had clearly presaged a row.

"I then showed Calhoun how beautifully the Russians had played it this afternoon—for we knew that it was being done as we were talking—how they had presented their demands almost as an ultimatum, and then, knowing that the Chinese would go squealing to our Legation and the others, had made the attempt to head this off by stating that all the powers had acquiesced in Russian plague preventive measures—i.e., the occupation of Chinese territory. This is of course a political occupation, pressure for the treaty settlement, and the Russians, playing the plague, have scored the first point by making it seem as if the other legations had concurred. I'll bet that the Chinese are in a funk tonight."

"Just exactly what I have feared all along had happened," Straight explained later. "Russia had made her move. At dinner tonight, Max-Müller [British Legation secretary] agreed that, if the Chinese had closed with us before on the loan contract, the Russians would probably never have dared take this action. He also told me that the Czar and the Kaiser had discussed China at Potsdam and that Russia's present action was to a great extent taken because Germany had appeared conciliatory as regards Russia's policy in the Far East."

These moves by Russia and Japan fanned Straight's ardor for Currency loan success. "I regret to say that to fight pleases me more than anything else I know," he wrote. "I've been at it hard all day and loving it. My hat's off to the enemy; they're an able crowd and I admire Japanese and Russian diplomacy, and distrust it correspondingly. We'll give 'em a run for their money.

"We have a great responsibility. My natural inclination—for I like the Chinese and believe in them—would be to give them a chance to work out their own salvation, test them by not insisting on any supervision, but I'm afraid we can't. Only now the officials in charge of the Ichang-Chengtu Railway (which was hailed as a to-be-built-by-China road) have been impeached for peculation, and the very man with whom we are negotiating now has just returned to office after five years' disgrace for taking a bribe in connection with the Shanghai-Nanking Railway. We shall have to be severe Elder Brothers, if we are to be truly friendly.

"It's a great game! If we win, it may mean that China, once her currency is on the sure road to reform, will abolish *likin* and be permitted to raise her tariff in accordance with the treaties. [Likin was an unscientific and unsatisfactory system of internal taxation, the source of widespread waste and corruption.] This done, she will be truly started toward reorganization, which alone can bring the efficiency to protect her against our Little Brown Brethren. So we have to play it with a long eye toward the future—and I am grateful for Ffrench, for Calhoun and for Davison.

"It is hard to trim and pare and make compromises, which, however right they may be and calculated to secure the best results for all concerned, are not to my liking. All of which means probably that the troubles of the next few months will have a most salutary effect on a somewhat intolerant and rampagious young person!"

"The understanding with which we took up the business was that China was to appoint a financial adviser [who was to have more than merely advisory powers]

PROMINENT FIGURES IN THE CURRENCY LOAN NEGOTIATIONS

Sir John Jordan, British Minister; Na Tung, Vice-Premier; Duke Tsai Tse, Minister of Finance, and W. J. Calhoun, American Minister, Appear Seated, Left to Right. Cordes, Casenave and Straight, Representing German, French and American Banks, Stand in the Order Named, from Right to Left

and seriously push currency reform," Straight wrote, in explaining the attitude of the Chinese. "The Chinese are jibbing, and we shall have great difficulty in assuring the measure of control without which we won't do business. I arrived here to find everybody disgruntled with the London agreement [between the four-Power bankers for joint issuance of the loan]. This impression was removed, I think. Bang! came another rock when we began to talk of the financial adviser. We are dealing with two men of quite different personality. Duke Tsai Tse, head of the Treasury, is honest, patriotic, rather dull and very narrow-minded, as obstinate as a mule and suspicious. I admire the man and think him sincere and high-minded. He must be shown that it is right for China. Hats off to him—would that there were more like him—but that they had sense! (Sense to do what we want them to!) For the rest of the lot, I have little use. Old A——is one of the most astute crooks in all the galaxy of the mandarinate. He wants 'squeeze', while the Duke wants to save China's face. Therefore neither of 'em wants a foreign adviser with any power."

What China wanted was to deal directly and solely with America in the Currency loan plan. For the reason that the money could not all be raised in America, the European groups were in a position to demand that they be admitted as joint signatories. Would the Chinese agree? They did not like to, but there were several persuasive factors, which Straight presented very directly.

"Then to see Mrs. Calhoun," he wrote. "Hu Wei-te was with the Minister. He called me aside and told me that he had been hearing that we had promised France participation in the loan, that we couldn't handle it ourselves, and that France must have joint signature. He said I had better come into the room with him and the Minister and explain. For two hours I gave Hu Wei-te fatherly advice, pointing out the connection between the Currency loan and the Chin-Ai. This nailed him hard.

"I spoke of the importance of letting the others in, in order to insure the success of currency reform, and then tariff revision—what the joint investment of American, French, British and German capital would mean for China's integrity. He was gasping for breath, poor devil, but I think he got it fairly straight. When I ended up by saying that if China insisted that we carry the transaction through ourselves alone, China would sacrifice her credit by foregoing an international quotation for her bonds and would endanger the success of currency reform and tariff revision by estranging the other Powers —when I got through with this, he wasn't so sure, after all, that we were doing 'em down and betraying them."

"The Chinese game becomes clearer now," Straight declared as negotiations proceeded. "I think we could devise a satisfactory plan for control, but I am sure the break would come over joint signature. The Chinese, I think, want to break up our bankers' agreement, if possible, for they hate the thought that they cannot continue to use their old tactics of playing us off one against the other. This is very short-sighted on their part, for"—here Straight sums up in a few words his whole Far Eastern gospel—"the creation of a strong, quadruple investment all through China would be the best insurance against a revival of the old spheres-of-influence idea. But they have no one big enough to see it.

"The Currency loan offers American diplomacy a

splendid chance not only to assist in China's regeneration but to ward off a very real and imminent danger. In the joint investments that should be secured under this agreement, American diplomacy may find the basis that will enable it to secure and hold the leadership of the four Powers in preserving the Open Door in China and the integrity of the nation."

Always the question of a financial adviser was the rock on which the negotiations threatened to split. The State Department at Washington insisted that the contract provide for the adviser and that he be an American. Many high-placed Chinese regarded it as an affront that their country should be required to yield to a foreigner supervision of the expenditure of the borrowed money. The Europeans thought that, inasmuch as they were providing a large share of the loan, they too should be represented by advisers. This suggestion—a board of several advisers—was especially displeasing to the Chinese.

"I think some way can be found to tie the adviser to the tail of the loan so that we shall have him and yet the Chinese won't have an international board, or the menace of him, during good behavior," Straight forecasted several months before the agreement was finally reached. "I have always felt that, if we only gave the pill a sufficiently sweet coating, the Chinese would swallow it."

But the resistance of the Chinese was strong. Intrigue among themselves was one of the chief reasons why their government did not come promptly to an understanding. One prominent Chinese in particular encouraged the opposition of his government. He himself aspired to be the arbiter of his country's financial policy, and, in order not to have his lustre dimmed by the intrusion of an outsider, he employed all his arts to defeat the adviser plan.

"X —— is well educated, an expert mathematician and can talk of exchanges, bonds, stocks, unearned increment, the curb market, and the history of currency," Straight records of him. "This load of information sits heavily on his stomach, like an unripe dumpling, and makes him peevish and truculent. He himself has prepared a scheme for currency reform. He doesn't want the adviser, for, if an able and practical man came here, he would probably prick some holes in X——'s reputation. He sits by the Duke and gives all manner of arguments why China should not bring in an outsider.

"X —— was here this afternoon. He showed his hand by trying to bluff me. He threatened me with the new Senate and all the powers of popular agitation. I told him we'd rather chuck the loan altogether than let China have the money without protecting China and ourselves by making satisfactory provision for genuine currency reform. The best part of dealing with a man like X—— is that, although he is insolent and a shrimp, he is very intelligent. He does know a great deal, so that he cannot help but recognize the strength of our arguments. What we ask is reasonable and in China's interest, and I think that we shall be able to turn the tables on the officials who wish to use the Senate against us.

"I am in the midst of an endeavor to keep New York from asking too much on the one hand and China from giving too little on the other. It's all very cheerful: the Group and the State Department howling for more; the Chinese cursing and squealing because we ask too much; the Japanese trying to stab us in our metaphorical backs; and the Russians, English, French and Germans knock-knock-knocking everywhere.

"We are trying to rejuvenate the Chinchou-Aigun under the dust-cloud raised by the discussion of the Currency loan. This game gets on my nerves a little. I dream of it all the time and work out schemes and counter-plays all night. It's a nuisance."

There were days of despair for Straight in those months of 1911, when all effort seemed doomed to failure.

"X—— told Mr. Calhoun that neither Duke Tsai Tse nor the Prince Regent would dare appoint a foreign adviser. Calhoun said, if that was the case, we might as well drop the matter at once," Straight wrote.

"It looks blacker than at any time up to date. The hopelessness of it all crushes me sometimes: ignorance, obstinacy, corruption here; lack of appreciation of Chinese conditions, indifference at home; Russia and Japan secretly antagonistic, insidious and far-sightedly cynical; England, France and Germany nominally sympathetic but actually jealous. Truly a fine situation!"

Thus Straight expressed himself to his close friends. But such moods were not mirrored in his demeanor. He was alert and tireless, breathing confidence.

The crisis in the negotiations came shortly after, over the question of the financial adviser. "The wire [from home] came in yesterday, insisting on the inclusion in the agreement of a reference to the adviser, and refusing flatly to discuss provision for Manchuria until an adviser had been *appointed*—not agreed to in principle, even. This seemed to me," Straight commented, "wholly unreasonable and unjustifiable."

Duke Tsai Tse absolutely refused to appoint the adviser under the conditions laid down by Washington and New York. It looked as if the loan were finished, "gone to join the Chin-Ai in cold storage". But Straight and Minister Calhoun had one more card to play. Acting on their own initiative, they sought to persuade the Chinese to agree to the appointment of an adviser, but in separate diplomatic notes, the matter not to be mentioned in the loan agreement. The most precious of all things to the Chinese statesmen was the outward dignity and repute that goes, in the East, under the name of "face"; and such a plan saved the Chinese "face". The Chinese would not have to admit before their people that, in order to borrow money, they had to submit to a too onerous and humiliating foreign control. Another part of this last resourceful plan was to secure the agreement of the Europeans by relinquishing insistence on an American adviser in favor of a neutral—a Hollander, a Swiss or some other. Straight and Calhoun set about inducing first the Chinese to agree, then the Europeans and finally the State Department and New York.

"Yesterday I got hold of the Viceroy's representative and A——'s secretary and gave them the dope (very businesslike, this!)," Straight records of the first skirmish:

"'1. Situation in Manchuria serious Japan and Russia may make some excuse to seize the country.' Admitted by Chinese with groans.

"'2. What to do?' They didn't know.

"'3. You must call on America?' 'Yes.'

"'4. You know America won't fight?' 'Ye-es.'

"'5. You know America is disgusted owing to your failure to appoint an adviser and put through the loan.' 'Ye-es.'

"'6. If America won't fight, you must then get in

France, England and Germany—these being the Powers with America interested in preserving the integrity of China?' 'Yes—yes.'"

But in order to carry the plan through, Straight had to go over the heads of the authorized negotiators to the powerful Prince Tsai Tao. He was able to adopt this means of approach because of the impress that his personality had made in the most exalted circles in China. Personally, he laid the situation before the Prince.

"I stated that I was acting entirely unofficially and privately but felt that China was confronted by the most serious crisis. I pointed out that while the United States, England, France and Germany were interested in the preservation of China's integrity, both Russia and Japan desired to keep China too weak to resist their aggression. Owing to the panic caused by an increasing death rate due to the rapid spread of the plague in Manchuria, it was feared that at any time there might be anti-foreign or anti-Japanese riots, which would enable Russia and Japan to rush troops into Manchuria and strengthen their hold upon it, if not actually seize it.

"The prince admitted this possibility. He also admitted that, in case Russia or Japan or both took such action, there would be general unrest and possibly outbreaks throughout China proper. He further admitted that China would be unable herself to meet Russian and Japanese aggression and would be obliged to turn to the foreign Powers for assistance, and he agreed that such assistance could best be secured if the Powers, and particularly America, felt that their interests were menaced by Russia and Japan.

"I then pointed out that the American government and the American Group were much chagrined by the failure of China, as promised, to appoint an American financial adviser and conclude the Currency loan; and that England, France and Germany were irritated by the failure of China to settle the Hukuang loan and to admit the tripartite banks to the loan for currency reform. To secure the assistance of these Powers against the encroachment of Russia and Japan it would be necessary to give them some *quid pro quo*. This could best be done by admitting other banks to a participation in the Currency loan and immediately settling this matter and the Hukuang.

"If Manchuria were seized or occupied by Russia and Japan and general unrest should follow in China, it would be impossible to float Chinese bonds on either American or European markets. It was therefore essential that immediate steps be taken by China to secure the friendly interest of the four Powers by concluding these two loans.

"An arrangement could be made whereby the Chinese government should request the American government to recommend not an American but a foreign adviser. The American government, before recommending such an official, could consult with the governments of England, France and Germany, obtain approval of the man to be recommended, whether of American or other nationality, and thus secure the acquiescence of these three Powers in the appointment of a single adviser.

REPRESENTATIVES OF FOREIGN BANKERS

Cordes, Hillier, Casenave and Straight Brought to China the Direct Support of Their Governments in the Loans of 1911

"If China acted quickly in this matter and created a large joint interest by permitting the four banks to float the Currency loan, she would obtain practically an international guarantee for her integrity, and any drastic action that Russia and Japan might contemplate in Manchuria might be forestalled. [Russia and Japan had already demanded participation and advisers in the Currency loan.]

"His Highness seemed impressed with these statements and promised to lay them before the Prince Regent and to bring pressure upon the Duke Tsai Tse speedily to conclude the Currency loan on the basis suggested.

"He reiterated his conviction that the appointment of an adviser was necessary and stated that he feared that Duke Tsai Tse had not taken a broad view of the situation but had been influenced by the arguments of certain subordinates in the Board of Revenue. His Highness thought that, if the situation could be clearly presented to the Duke when these subordinates were not present, the Duke might be able to recognize the need for immediate action and could be convinced that in appointing an adviser China would not run the risk of being subjected to international control."

Four days after this interview came one with the Minister actually charged with loan negotiations. Straight proposed this:

"The Chinese government to address the American Legation and request the American government to recommend a foreign financial adviser. The American government to reply that it would so recommend. In order to preserve the greatest secrecy, this interchange of notes not to take place until the loan agreement was practically ready."

His Excellency stated that he would consent to the admission of the tripartite banks to the loan and asked whether Straight desired the negotiations to be conducted by all four representatives or whether he himself would negotiate. Straight replied that he preferred to conduct negotiations alone. When the agreement had been practically settled with His Excellency, Straight was to submit the draft to the tripartite banks, which were to be invited to sign.

The critical battle had been fought and won. But the rest of the campaign, to the final signature of the loan, in April, 1911, was not conducted over primrose paths. "We're around the wall," said Straight, "but I can't say that I feel particularly hilarious. We've merely got through the mud and mire and bad weather. It now remains to be seen whether we can win the last fight. Until the agreement is signed, there's no breathing space. I'm really very glad that there is not to be an American adviser. Whoever comes here will have a terrible task before him. Europeans are much better content to hold down posts like this, for the official 'kudos' of it appeals to them tremendously. They get decorations and all manner of trophies."

Prince Tsai Tao lived up to his promise. "This afternoon I saw Prince Tsai Tao again. He didn't go to the Russian ball last night but went to the Regent; and, as a result, we have our note tonight. It's extraordinary, the Regent and the whole crowd working to keep this matter out of the Foreign Office, so that it won't be blocked by Japanese influence through Na Tung. Tsao Tao was as pleased as a kid with a new toy today. He did it. As a matter of fact he did- most of it. My connection with him is about the best I've ever made in China. We get along like hot cakes. It's a great game, this trick of working the machinery of government through the Regent's brother, over the heads of ministers and all!"

Maurice Casenave, representative of the French bankers, was enthusiastic for the plan as outlined and was heartily engaged in working with his own government and Legation to gain support for the appointment of a neutral adviser, rather than insist on the demand it had made for a French adviser. He and Straight were working on close terms of friendship and sympathy of ideas, and it was largely the French backing of the plan, thus secured by Casenave, that brought the other Europeans into line.

The State Department and the American Group accepted the entire program. "I've been working all evening on about the 'steenth draft of the loan agreement," wrote Straight. "It's awkward, because for the sake of secrecy I don't want to show it to the other banks; so I have to do it alone, hoping that when the time comes to sign, if it ever does, they'll be so crazy to come in anyhow that they won't raise objections to the terms. I'm fairly safe, for I'm merely adopting clauses from former agreements. . . . Meeting of the bankers this morning," he wrote, next day, "and they seemed pretty well satisfied with the agreement as I've drawn it. They are delighted and I think very much surprised. I don't think they thought we could pull it off. . . ."

"It's now nearly three G. M. All day with Hillier, Cordes and Casenave, first- and then with the Minister —I've been working on telegrams. Then home and Geare, Gatrell and I have been working up till about fifteen minutes ago on our cable. I hate to think how much it cost—something like $1,400 - quite a pile."

"This afternoon I walked with the old man [Minister Calhoun] on the wall. There was a north wind, fresh and sharp; the hills were purple and clear-cut against the sky; the clouds stringy, in the wind, and burnished by the last rays of the sun; and the yellow palace-roofs glistened."

But the Chinese were to make one last squirm for release from any real advisership. The head of the "Board of Pests and Excommunications", as Straight called the Board of Posts and Communications, had meanwhile signed a separate loan with the Japanese for $5,000,000. And now the Chinese refused to sign the Currency loan, so long as it contained the "conditional clause", giving the bankers six months in which to examine the Chinese program for currency reform, to determine before issuing the bonds, whether it was satisfactory.

"They have no intention of doing more than making a pretense of currency reform," was Straight's regretful conclusion at this point. "They know their scheme to be weak and are afraid that, if they sign the agreement now, we will hold them to effective currency reform. So they appeal to our cupidity and hope that we, in order to make our profit on the loan, will pay little attention to securing reform. As a banking proposition their attitude is sound enough - buyers of bonds don't care whether the Chinese currency system is reformed or not - and we could undoubtedly do as they wish and make a profit. But we look upon the agreement as an instrument that should enable us to force China, even against the selfish, narrow-minded bigotry of these officials, to adopt a scheme that will really make currency reform effective. We should rather have the whole thing bust than sacrifice any of the possibilities of this scheme, which means so much for the future of China."

The difference was settled in the technical wording of the translation of the final draft, under which Straight felt the bankers had retained their position and the Chinese were satisfied. The "Currency Reform Loan and Manchurian Development Loan Agreement" was signed, without further quibbling, in April, and the Hukuang loan in May.

"It is no miswriting of current history to pronounce the successful negotiation of China's two great loans of 1911 a 'triumph for American diplomacy'," cabled the late J. K. Ohl, correspondent at Peking, to his paper, the *New York Herald*. "For China, America's 'equal voice' is of greatest value. It brings strongly to her support the four great nations that now have a large and direct stake in her regeneration and development.

"In contributing their full part to the successful completion of these projects the representatives of the four groups may, therefore, be said to have rendered notable services not only to their principals but to China and to world progress, since that which promotes the welfare of one-fifth the world's population must necessarily greatly affect the interests of all other nations as well."

Straight came home in the spring of 1911. In September, he was married to Dorothy Whitney, daughter of the late William C. Whitney, and they went to Peking, arriving just in time to see the outbreak of the Revolution.

Chapter VIII
THE REVOLUTION

AS the main motive force at Peking for the international banking group, Williard Straight had, in the spring of 1911, concluded written agreements upon loans for Manchurian development, Currency reform and the Hukuang Railways. Fagged out by the months of daily and nightly dickering, he was restless to get away from the East for a while. He wanted to close up the unfinished features of the loan undertakings in conferences with the bankers in Europe and America. But there was another reason for his eagerness to leave Peking.

"In November, 1909," writes his friend, J. O. P. Bland, "Miss Dorothy Whitney, Mrs. Bend and Miss Beatrice Bend [afterward to become Mrs. Henry P. Fletcher] came to spend a fortnight as guests at the Legation. After a week of sight-seeing and picnics there came a memorable excursion to the Great Wall and the Ming Tombs, at which the die of Straight's destiny was cast. It was a very successful outing. There were five of us all told - Miss Bend, Miss Whitney and Straight, Fletcher and myself. Straight played the part of host in his usual princely style. It was superb weather, of the quality which North China provides in the brief days of Indian summer. Many incidents of those eventful days linger in my memory, but none more vividly than luncheon in the half-ruined courtyard of the tomb of the Yuan Wang. Bright sunshine, and an eager, nipping air like champagne made the blood dance in one's veins and made one rejoice in the simple fact of being alive. A little breeze from the north was singing a song of the desert to the sweet-smelling pines and softly covering the broken pavements with a carpet of oak and locust leaves. All about us was the gentle melancholy of man's work passing to oblivion in silent, inexorable decay; marble bridges collapsing on their foundations, roofs slowly subsiding beneath their weight of years, even the ancestral tablets of the mighty dead all in disorder and awry, and in the midst of them, Straight, with his guitar, singing of the Blessed Damozel. I remember that the night before, after dinner at the Nankou Hotel, in a roomful of sleek, foreign-garbed, Cantonese railway officials, he had sung most of his favorite Kipling songs, 'The wild hawk to the wind-swept sky' and 'For to admire and for to see'; but from that memorable fourteenth of November, his own *Wanderlust* was all in one direction and of one purpose."

In Switzerland, in September, 1911, Straight was married to Miss Whitney. In October they were in Peking, where he was to work out the final details of the Currency loan. In that same month the Revolution broke out in Wuchang and spread rapidly over the Empire. This upset the whole Currency reform plan.

The Revolution was by no means unexpected. Since the death of the old Empress Dowager nearly three years before, the politics of the Chinese Empire had been in a highly nervous state. Straight had watched with keen interest the growing unrest. His familiarity with Chinese character, his realization of the ignorance of the masses, was calculated to make him fearful of popular government. Moreover, his eagerness to get his own work done prompted him to disapprove any movement that might throw the country into chaos. Yet the corruption of the government so disgusted him that there were times when he leaned to the view that the only salvation for the millions of Chinese workers lay in a sweeping change. Many months before the outbreak he wrote:

"The Senate is going after the Grand Council once more. If it doesn't get 'em this time, it will dissolve, and then there will be an uproar all over China. No loans then, I can tell you, for a long while. For the people will take over the whole show and it will be some time before they can establish a stable government. I say this with all reserve, for the more I hear and read of this constitutional movement the less I hold to my attitude of skepticism about its real efficiency and the more I believe that it is China's one hope and a very good one at that.

"The whole country seems knit together behind the provincial assemblies in the most remarkable manner. It's all a growth of the past two years, and is due largely to the spread of newspapers all over the Empire and their passing from the fanatical hands of the returned students to the control of a much more sober and reputable element, the literati and merchants, who are of a very high order of intelligence and who, though patriotic and radical, are still sound and in many respects conservative.

"The leading articles in some of the Chinese journals are remarkably able. One is always inclined to doubt the probable effect of words in China, however. Though no force is more potent, no currency in the world is more debased. For in this land, above all others, the shadow has for years passed for the substance, notwithstanding the virile practicality of the people in material things. The hope for China lies in the fact that perhaps the people are now for the first time realizing the direct personal benefit they would secure if they were to rid themselves of the mandarins and set up an efficient government.

"I've met some of the senators and have been much impressed with their ability and their conservative, sane view. The returned students bark and holler, but these older fellows are not so bad and they may yet do great things."

Nevertheless, despite his instinctive sympathy with the efforts to overthrow utterly the corrupt imperial régime, in the first weeks of the Revolution Straight favored a moderate policy—a relinquishment by the Manchus of all their real power but such preservation of the old form of government as would prevent demoralization and assure orderly progress. He saw the answer to the problem in the restoration to power of Yuan Shih-kai - then in exile by a decree of the court—a vigorous administrator who alone, in Straight's opinion, was capable of knitting the factions together and setting up a strong, yet liberal, government. Therefore he urged upon the governments represented in the international concert the advisability of giving Yuan such moral and

financial support as would "enable him to conserve and extend his authority, as the most promising nucleus for a responsible government in China". He sought thereby to forestall what actually did come about, what he described as "the organization of a loosely knitted federation of jealous and mutually antagonistic provinces destined to failure by reason of its weakness and dissensions".

The Manchus did indeed abdicate, naming Yuan as legatee of their tottering estate. But the Powers did not give Yuan support. In consequence he could not hold his control and had to compromise with the revolt. A republic was proclaimed, and he was chosen provisional president. Tang Shao-yi, Straight's old-time collaborator of Mukden days, always adept at alighting on his feet, became premier.

In that late fall and early winter, the Straights were in the midst of the excitement of the struggle between the imperial and the republican forces. On November 17, Straight wrote to a friend at home:

"We have had a rather anxious time. Hundreds of thousands have left Peking, and for days many of the shops have been closed. It's reported each afternoon that at night the ball will commence, that the Manchus will massacre the Chinese, or the Chinese the Manchus, that the police and the division of troops stationed here for the protection of the court have divided the city into districts for looting purposes, and that, though foreigners will not be touched, we are in danger from fires and stray shots. Hence we have always turned in with a brace of revolvers by our side, a Krag in the corner, and a couple of rockets to send up to call in a promised patrol of twenty marines to bring us to the Legation Quarter if there is a row. This is all highly interesting in a diary to be read years afterward, but as a honeymoon experience it's a bit thick with excitement."

WANG-FO-TANG

In January the Straights got away for a vacation, visiting Shanghai, Hongkong and Manila and returning by way of Japan, Korea and Manchuria. Says Bland of that trip:

"It acted on Straight like a tonic, turning his mind from the slough of despond at Peking to the world of men and things beyond those gray walls. He was particularly impressed and cheered by seeing what America had accomplished in the Philippines. 'Manila,' he wrote me, 'made an extraordinary impression upon me. It is applied Christianity and nothing else. Whether it will be successful or not, I don't know, but it's a wonderful experiment. It's altruism, pure and simple. For once the American has attempted to make performance conform to profession, which I don't think he often does, for we are, like the Chinese, a nation of word-worshipers. . . . It warmed the cockles of my heart and gave me new faith in the possibility of making some of our fundamental American ideas practical living guides, instead of ammunition for the Fourth of July oration of commerce.' "

In the same letter Straight expressed admiration for the achievements of the Japanese, a forecast of the more tolerant attitude he was to assume toward them in later years:

"We came up through Korea. Bland, our hats are off to the Japanese! It may be all advertisement, but it's surely an effective one. For they are efficient. You can't get away from what they are doing or do aught but admire it. In Korea I was tremendously interested to hear that the natives were better off than ever before, and it was not a Japanese who told me, either. They are beginning to wake up from the lethargy of centuries of oppression and are producing, and making and saving money and gaining some self-respect, which in the old days was denied them. Perish the thought, but one could not help thinking that we might all be better off if these people had charge of China's destiny, after all. They would make things hum, and the proposition would be so big that they could not run in any monopoly game. And then, like the Manchus, they would be so corrupt after a few generations and so softened by riches—*vide* the Osaka division during the war—that they would be no longer a military menace to the rest of us honest folk."

In February, Straight was back in Peking. Despite the agreement arrived at between the two factions, the government was still in a pitiful state of impotence. In that month a mutiny of unpaid troops occurred. The streets of the capital were scenes of riot and bloodshed. Though the fighting was not directed against foreigners, the missionaries in their walled compounds and the Legation people in their Quarter prepared to protect themselves. The Straights were among the comparatively few foreigners who were living in houses separated from both groups. They were aroused one evening by

shooting in the street near by, and soon after left their home to go to the fortified Legation Quarter for safety. There they stayed several days, until the mutiny was quelled.

"Dr. Morrison of the London *Times* came in to assure us there was no danger," wrote Straight, in relating the events of that night. "He said that there was looting and street fighting but that foreigners were allowed to pass unmolested. That didn't sound so cheerful, especially as more fires had been started and the whole sky to the north seemed ablaze, while the firing continued steadily. The crack of rifles was punctuated by the booming of field-pieces in the distance and the crackle of machine-guns near by. It would have been folly to try to get through the soldier-filled streets without a foreign guard. We therefore sat tight and dined. The noise of the Gatlings, we afterward learned, came from the Imperial Palace, where the guards had blazed away down the street to scare off any venturesome gentlemen after the Palace treasures.

GATE OF A VILLAGE THRESHING-FLOOR

"A few minutes later there was a babble of many voices outside our compound. Then came the crashing of glass, the rip-rip of the planking, the shock of rifle butts on barred doors. The looters were at the silver shop across the narrow alley. In a moment there was pounding at our gate. I went for the gate, expecting to find a mob of soldiery. Then came a voice in Chinese, 'Open the gate; Dr. Morrison is here.' I thought they were after him. I pulled the gate open, and the whole show came in on us. There was no trouble, however.

"Morrison had come, with great kindness, to say that he thought Dorothy would be better off in his place, where a number of foreigners were gathered. We left our house and walked to Morrison's gate. The street was bright with the fire-glow. Parties of from two to a dozen soldiers were walking or running along, carrying their bundles of loot. Every now and then they would stop to smash in some shop. Some carried torches to light them while they pillaged. The firing continued all about, but we finally reached Morrison's unharmed. As we stood in the gate, a number of shopkeepers begged asylum. From the balcony we could see the street filled with soldiers rushing back and forth. Across the road a large bazar and a theater were burning. After an hour and a half, twenty American marines came for us and we started out for the Legation. Dorothy, her maid in her lap, the bags tied on behind, piled into one rickshaw and we started at double-time down the street to the Menocals. They came out on horseback, their rickshaw laden with bundles and a coolie, carrying a blanket into which Menocal had piled all his wife's dresses. Casenave, who had come to see that we were all right, took part of our guard and went off through some alleyways to get the Patchins. We reached the Legation in safety and untroubled by the gangs of looters."

When the troops rebelled, the Manchu princes feared for the money they had hidden away, it appeared, as much as for their lives.

One day Straight received an urgent appeal from old Prince Ching, the real power in Manchu statecraft, to come and take away a hoard of gold and silver coins from his residence. Again Casenave was with Straight — they were inseparable companions in those days. The two, with a donkey-cart and a native guard hurriedly obtained, went to get the treasure. They found it hidden away in chimneys, in the seats of sofas, under the flooring, behind the plastering of the walls. When it was piled into boxes, they started through the streets with it. The news of their mission had somehow got abroad, a crowd had gathered, and every minute they expected to be attacked. At last they reached one of the foreign banks in the Quarter, and there, with plenty of European and American soldiers around, the Prince's coins were safely deposited.

Except for the brief period of the soldiers' mutiny, however, foreigners were quite safe. Social life proceeded much as in normal times. To the home of the Straights came the most engaging personalities of Peking Manchus and Chinese as well as Europeans and Americans. One of Straight's creations that winter was the Club of the Purple Cows. The French Minister, M. de Margerie, American Minister Calhoun and Mrs. Calhoun, Major and Mrs. Russell, of the American Legation Guard, Mr. and Mrs. de Menocal, M. Casenave, Lord ffrench and Straight gathered once a week, at the house of each member in turn, and talked (in the words of Casenave, quoting Pico della Mirandola) "*de omni re scibili et de quibusdam aliis*" that is to say, of everything under the sun. At times there were gay parties at which elderly statesmen joined their younger companions in all manner of frolicsome nonsense.

The political chaos in that winter of 1911–1912 was reflected, for a time, in a corresponding indecision in the Far Eastern policy of the foreign Powers. While the outcome of the revolt was in doubt, the question was to which faction money should be lent. The natural tendency of European diplomats was to side with the Manchu dynasty. Sympathy with the revolutionists was particularly strong among Americans, both in the East and in America. Straight's middle-ground advice was

PORTRAIT OF A JAPANESE GENTLEMAN

not accepted, and the Powers followed a policy that, at a later date, would have been called "watchful waiting".

With the hatchet once buried—the Manchus ousted and the Republic proclaimed—it was again time to talk of loans. But now the term "Currency loan" was laid aside. For the present need was not for money in the interest of any one project. Currency reform was to be on the program but the sorest immediate need of the Republic was for funds for the routine of administration troops, policing and the necessary public services. The financial aid to be extended by the Powers was henceforth known as the Reorganization loan.

Throughout China, government was demoralized. Many taxes had been abolished or suspended, and it was impossible to collect most of those still in force.

"During the Revolution the republican authorities had maintained themselves largely by forced levies or by subscriptions received from Chinese residing abroad, while the Peking officials and the army under their control had received nothing save the few millions of taels extracted from the Palace treasure," Straight wrote. "It was imperative that the coalition government obtain funds at once. On February 26, 1912, the representatives of the British, French, German and American groups, who had been invited to meet the Chinese authorities, agreed immediately to advance 2,000,000 taels in Shanghai to forestall a threatened mutiny of troops in Nanking.

"On this occasion Tang Shao-yi proposed that China borrow from these groups $300,000,000 to be utilized in general administrative reorganization. The groups agreed to refer this matter to their principals. This marked the beginning of the negotiations for the much discussed six-Power loan."

Tang Shao-yi was not long in leaving the government, whether by his own will or not. He was succeeded by a man in whom the representatives of the foreign bankers had more confidence. Straight and his colleagues now urged upon their principals the wisdom of granting a loan. Their advice prevailed.

"The British, French, German and American governments," wrote Straight, "recognized that a large loan was necessary to put the new Chinese government on its feet and enable it to establish its authority. They believed joint action in China would constitute the most effective guarantee for the stability of the young Republic. The four banking groups were therefore informed that their respective governments desired Russian and Japanese interests to coöperate in any loan that might be undertaken. President Yuan Shih-kai gave the assurance that he would welcome such participation."

Just how Russia and Japan came to be admitted into the international combination is thus described by one who was at that time within the inner diplomatic circle at Peking:

"The entry of the Americans into the Anglo-Franco-German group had naturally aroused a lively interest in the Russian and Japanese governments. It had, naturally, also, frightened them. Until then the combination was composed of France, ally of Russia, of England, ally of Japan, and of Germany, with whom these two Powers —who had a purely Asiatic policy in China—were on excellent terms. Russia and Japan both knew that neither France nor England nor Germany would oppose their policy in Manchuria and Mongolia. America was quite another factor in such a transaction as this.

"In Petersburg as in Tokyo it was known that the United States was entering into the combination only with a view to protecting China and maintaining the *status quo*. If Russia and Japan had doubts on this subject, the proposition for internationalizing the Manchurian railways, launched late in 1909 by Secretary of State Knox, was there to remove them. The best means, for them, of defending what they considered their special interests in the Far East was under these conditions, not to try to oppose an existing combination, against which they could do nothing, but to come into it themselves. This was the point of view held by the Russian Legation at Peking, whose ministers were successively Mr. Korostovetz and Mr. B. Krupiensky, and by the man who had the financial policy of Japan in the Far East in charge, Mr. Odagiri, administrator of the Yokohama Specie Bank and its director at Peking. The latter was a former diplomat, an excellent Sinologue, who had spent almost his whole career in China, and a man of exceptional intelligence and tact.

"The Russian and Japanese governments had therefore taken steps in Paris and London to come into the combination at Peking. Straight had had frequent con-

versations on this subject with the Russian Minister and Mr. Odagiri. Obviously neither the French nor the English government could refuse the demand of its allies, considering the important interests that urged the latter to formulate it. But this was not the case with America, which, given the aggressive policy of these two nations, might consider it with suspicion. But Willard Straight's very sure judgment gauged the situation perfectly.

"Evidently neither the Russians nor the Japanese could assert a claim to share in either the financing or the construction of railways, or even of public works, in China. As they themselves were borrowers abroad, the condition of their finances did not allow them to issue foreign loans. And their industry was far from being considerable enough to allow them to export railway material. Nevertheless, given the importance of their political interests in the Far East, they were justified in demanding participation in loans of a purely political nature. In the latter case, they would have to be allowed to dispose of their financial participation in the loans, in foreign markets, on a commission basis to be regulated with the other Powers.

"Such were the conclusions that were reached, after the conversations that the bankers' representatives had on this subject with Mr. de Hoyer, who had been sent as financial agent of the Russian Group and of Mr. Odagiri. Straight communicated them to Mr. Calhoun, United States minister at Peking, who procured their recognition by the State Department.

"At the time of the discussion of the loan for monetary reform, Russia and Japan had asked to share in it, alleging that it was a political loan; their request had been refused for the reason that China had proposed the contract for the loan before they themselves had claimed a share in our financial combinations. The loan that the new Chinese republican government was requesting from the Powers had, however, a definitely political character. The participation of Russia and Japan was allowed in this case; the understanding of the six Powers was an accomplished fact and negotiations opened on this basis.

"It was a lively satisfaction to Straight, because he saw in this arrangement the complete internationalization of Chinese affairs that had been the object of his desires and his patient labor for six years. No one had worked harder than he for this end, and it was certainly a great compliment to him that the confidence that his English, French and German colleagues had shown in him should be shared by his new Russian and Japanese associates. For Dr. Gattrell and he were delegated to draw up the new contract plan, just as they had been charged before with drawing up the contract for the Currency loan."

In letters written in November and December of 1911,

Mrs. W. J. Calhoun

WILLIAM J. CALHOUN AND WILLARD STRAIGHT

Photograph Taken in the American Legation Compound at Peking During Mr. Calhoun's Service as American Minister to China

Straight had foreshadowed the admission of the Russians and Japansee into the banking combination.

"Although the Japanese are now attacking Germany and leaving us alone for the time being, the Russians are still damning us. They claim that our entry into the China field has been responsible for all the present disorders. They insist that we are persistently anti-Russian; that this is proved by our hooray about Morgan Shuster ni Persia, by our attempts to get railway concessions in Turkey, by the agitation over Jewish passports for Russia. Izwolsky at Paris, the officials in St. Petersburg and the people here are trying to play on French and Japanese susceptibilities, to create suspicion of our good faith and the honesty of our intentions. It looks to me as if a serious attempt were being made to break up the quadruple combination, which is not looked upon with favor in either Russia or Japan. I fear that in the readjustment which is bound to follow the present row we shall have to admit to a participation in all Chinese business our Russian and Japanese friends."

Increasing evidence of the inclination of the French

and British to "play in with" the Russians strengthened Straight in this belief. He tells of a letter received from a high official in a European government warning his correspondent in Peking to "beware of being led by Willard Straight into any move that our ally would not like".

"Blank cusses us out quite frankly in this letter," says Straight, "and seems to feel that we are to blame for all his troubles. The situation would not be serious but for the fact that, judging from Sir Edward Grey's recent speech, England as well as France regards Russian friendship as all-important in view of the growing menace of Germany. Great Britain is letting Russia play horse in Persia, and I doubt if we can find much British support against either Russian or Japanese aggression in China."

His letters and diary during the period from October, 1911, to March, 1912, show how closely Straight was in touch with all sources of information about the course of political and financial affairs in China and how commanding a part he played in the negotiations between the Chinese and the foreign governments on the subject of loans. His friends among the Chinese were coming to him at all hours of the day and night to report the ups and downs of the republican movement. Through the American Legation, where he was a trusted adviser, as well as through his European friends, he was kept informed of every move in the diplomatic game. The warring factions, each seeking aid from abroad, sent their representatives to him with pleas for transmission to the international combination. One of his letters describes in detail a theatrically mysterious visit paid to him by General Homer Lea in company with a revolutionary leader from the South, who had come to Peking in disguise. The revolutionist was Dr. Sun Yat-sen.

"The General entered with a low black slouch hat over one eye, a long cloak of the same color wrapped around his person, carrying a wand like a conductor's baton, made of ebony richly chased in silver. His companion, the Doctor, was dressed in an affluent fur coat and a pleasing smile. The General spoke of the importance of his friends in both London and America, and particularly emphasized Senator Root's desire to see both him and the Doctor succeed. Though somewhat alarmed by the General's appearance and loquacity, I thought it well to talk the matter over with Addis [one of the banking representatives], and we arranged to dine with the latter at his house, where the newspaper reporters were not apt to track the mysterious Doctor."

The object of the visitors' pilgrimage was, of course, to obtain money. They wanted a million pounds to begin with, of which about half was to go to pay for rifles and ammunition. They were told that so soon as they constituted themselves a responsible government the Powers would be glad to extend them loans.

From the time Straight arrived in Peking in October, he had looked forward to being relieved of Far Eastern duty within a few months and going back to live in America. To this desire he recurred again and again in his letters to the Group in New York. He said he had been in the East ten years and had enough of it. "I haven't got cold feet and don't want to leave as long as you think it best for me to stay," he wrote to Henry P. Davison in November, "but I do hope that you will tell me to come home once things are clearer, for I am disgusted and sick to death of this whole boiling. Really, I feel that I want to get out in sheer disillusionment. This is a very personal feeling, and you will rightly say it has nothing to do with the Group's desire for me to stay here and see this crisis through and to pull out of it what I can. That, of course, I want to do; but that done, I'd like to beat it and not come back for many moons. Don't think that I want to leave before you are ready to have me. I owe far too much to you personally and to the Group to think of such a thing. But I want to come home if you can use me there or elsewhere. I like it less here each time I return, for I am fed up on China and feel that I've been here long enough for the good of my soul.

"I am quite willing to play this present hand to a finish," he wrote just after Christmas, "but I don't want to come in for each fresh deal. Special trips to the East on special work would of course be expected. But I want to become identified with things at home, rather than be taken permanently as a Chinese and regarded as useful only in this field. I want to leave Peking but I should also like to continue in the game at the other end, for I feel that, an establishment having been started here, a more definite and tangible organization should be formed both at home and in China."

His request was granted, and the bankers at home sent out Frank McKnight to take over his work. Straight left Peking in the early spring of 1912 and never returned.

He had come three years before, unknown in big affairs; frowned upon as a poacher by the Europeans because of his mission and looked upon with some disdain because of his youth. The three years had wrought a vast difference in their esteem of him. The choice of him as their spokesman in the most difficult negotiations bears sufficient testimony to their judgment of his ability. The truly remarkable demonstration of their regret at his departure gave proof of their friendship. It has been related, by those who lived in Peking in those days, that hardened intriguers of the foreign colony could not keep their eyes clear when they gathered at the railroad station to bid him good-by. The charm that drew them to him was the charm of his youth and vivacity and ability, expressed in their own terms—gaiety, wit, keenness, nerve—and based upon fundamental sincerity and directness. His aims were high, but they were humanized by the humor and the innate kindness of his character.

After he came back from China, Straight was connected with J. P. Morgan & Company, as expert on Far Eastern affairs. In Casenave's words, recalling that period, "He continued to interest himself passionately in the policy which he had done so much to create." He was the constant adviser of the American Group. When he had been in China, the bankers at home, for all their high ability, had been of necessity somewhat in the dark in directing his campaign in Peking. Now at their elbow was one familiar with all the ins and outs of Chinese politics and finance. When a cablegram from Peking compelled them to make an important decision, the bankers found his information and counsel invaluable.

Negotiations over the terms of the loan dragged on. As in the case of the Currency loan, the year before, the chief point of dispute was the question of control. The foreign lenders were not willing to turn the vast amount of money over to the Chinese without such supervision as would prevent theft and waste.

The foreign banking groups insisted that, as a condition of the loan, there should be a system of audit in which foreigners should be employed with executive

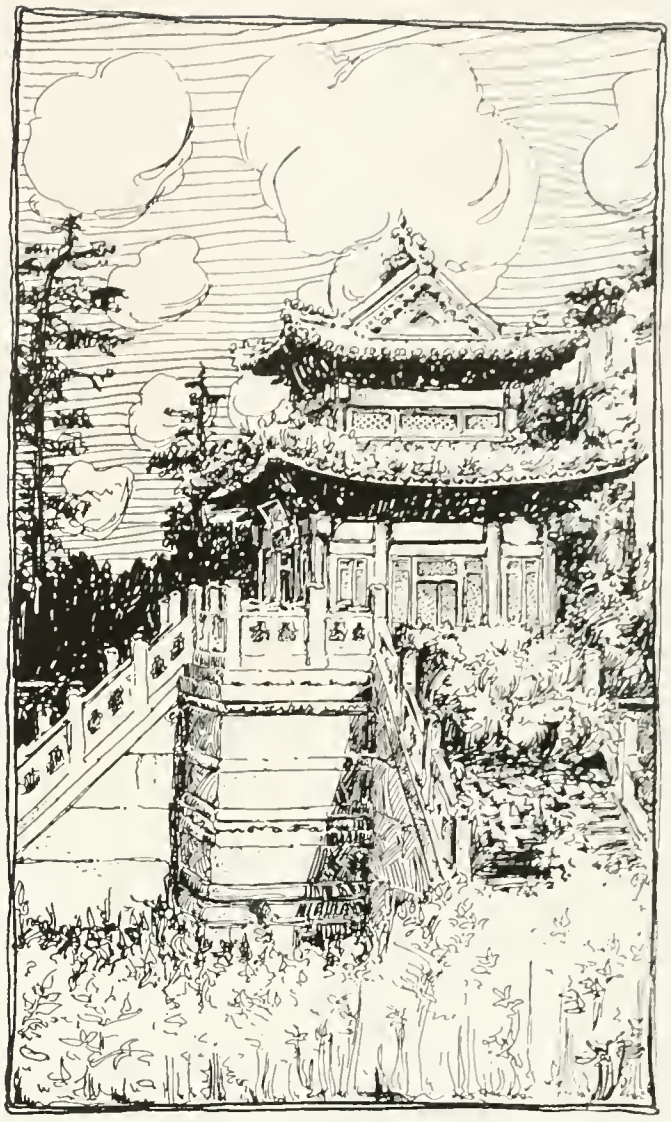
powers; that the revenues pledged as security should be collected by a separate service like the customs, under foreign direction; and that for five years China should constitute the lending groups its financial agents to assist the new government in its work of reorganization.

"Many of the leading men in Peking have privately recognized the wisdom of the Group's conditions," wrote Straight, "and the advantages to be gained should they be accepted. Officially, however, these gentlemen have not dared recommend their acceptance."

One who reviews the six-Power loan project from the vantage point of 1921 is struck by its basic resemblance to the Consortium of 1920. Yet the effort of eight years ago was loudly condemned, while the recent Consortium has been received with general acclaim. "Dollar diplomacy" was the term invented to give sting to the criticism of the earlier enterprise. It was charged that the six-Power groups were forcing China to borrow enormous sums, which she did not require; that the terms demanded interfered with her administrative independence and threatened her territorial integrity; that through their machinations the bankers had obliged their respective governments to withhold recognition of the Chinese Republic until the loan had been concluded.

It was the acceptance of this hostile view that caused the incoming Democratic administration in 1913 to withdraw governmental support of the loan. Secretary of State William J. Bryan held a conference with the bankers' representatives and immediately afterward President Wilson declared in a public statement that his administration would not be a party, "even by implication", to the proposed conditions of the loan. This took the Americans out of the combination, and the six-Power became the five-Power loan. The amount finally agreed upon was $125,000,000. Later in the year 1913, the contract putting the loan into effect was concluded between China and the five Powers. On March 25, 1913, a week after the new administration at Washington announced the withdrawal of its support, Straight made the following shrewd prophecy in writing to McKnight in Peking: "I believe that the policy that we have pursued has been so essentially sound that not only will it be justified by future events but it will assert itself to such a degree that even this administration will be forced eventually to adopt more or less the methods of its predecessor." Which came true to the letter!

The war, by throwing a new light on the Far Eastern problem as one of world-wide importance, has obscured the parallel between the undertakings of 1913 and 1920. The idea of international coöperation is the foundation of the one as of the other. The ideal that Willard Straight cherished and that he personified was to give aid to China in such a way that she would preserve her territorial sovereignty unimpaired and would be subjected to the least possible degree of interference compatible with the protection of foreign investors. In so far as the Consortium of 1920 in the development of its plan follows that ideal, will it be successful in helping solve the Far Eastern tangle. The switch in the attitude of the public is due to the fact that the public has come to understand what those familiar with the East had understood long before. The initiation, by the Wilson administration, of last year's Consortium represented a sharp reversal of policy. The "dollar diplomacy" of 1913 became the "international coöperation" of 1920.



RUINS OF WAN SHOU-SHAN

Thus triumphed the Far Eastern doctrine of Willard Straight—a doctrine that he summed up when he advocated, just after the new administration had repudiated his scheme, "a diplomatic understanding between the great Powers, under which each is bound by a self-denying ordinance not to seek selfish gain at the expense of China or of the other Powers".

He did not live to see his vision realized. He was a decade ahead of time. Indeed, it is remarkable how often, in the course of his connection with Far Eastern affairs, fate seemed to step in and snatch the fruits of victory from his hand. In 1908, after his return from Mukden, when Tang Shao-yi was in the United States, the death of the Empress Dowager wrecked the first big loan plan. The next fall Harriman's death threw the Manchurian railways scheme into confusion. A few months later, the neutralization proposals gave rise to disastrous diplomatic complications. The Revolution upset the Currency loan for which he had cleared the way by months of labor. Then, the most ambitious undertaking of all, the coöperation of the great Powers in the Reorganization loan, was defeated—at least, America's participation in it was defeated—by the decision of the American government in 1913. Thus is presented one more instance of a man's work winning its reward only after his death.

Chapter IX
HOME FROM CHINA

WHEN Willard Straight settled down to live in New York, upon his return from the Far East, in 1912, New York knew little about him. But he had passed through the severest tests that modern commerce had to offer, and they had prepared him to face the great of Wall Street, not as an uncertainty, but as a man who had justified the trust reposed in him by a group of America's leading financiers. The six-Power loan to China was still on the cards, and for a while his attention was largely absorbed by that. But the pronouncement of the new administration, in March, 1913, abruptly taking America out of the six-Power combination, relieved him of his main task. There was plenty of work for him to do in connection with the Morgan firm's foreign interests, but his chief responsibility was gone. It was a terrific disappointment. The bottom had dropped out. The great work of his life was as ashes in his hand. Yet it was in keeping with his finely generous quality that there was in his feeling no resentment, no bitterness toward any one. And it was quite characteristic that he covered the profound depth of his disappointment with a spirit of humor and of buoyancy.

"Well, anyway," he wrote his friend J. O. P. Bland, "spring is in the air, the grass is good, the polo ponies are champing at the bit—and between you and me I'm not so damned sorry just now that there are no Chinese negotiations to worry about any longer. No telegrams to expect on Saturday afternoon; no loan agreements which are about to be signed every Tuesday morning and which are regularly violated on Thursday afternoon; no A—— to rile my bottommost soul; no Russians and Japanese to be cursing as of yore. There are these compensations!"

With all the crushing effect of the blow, his interest in the Far East did not diminish, and he set to work to attain the end of joint international action in China through other and more gradual means. The impression that his personality made upon men interested in America's foreign trade enabled him to take, at the very outset of his career in New York, a position of leadership in the movement to stimulate intercourse with the Orient.

He was elected president of the American Asiatic Association in 1913. This was a significant period in American economic history. A "competitive tariff" had been enacted and American business men were bidden by a new President to "whet their wits in competition with the wits of the world". At the same time it had been rendered impossible for the American bankers to continue participation in loans to China. Industry was at a low ebb. Never was the need of foreign markets so felt in order that labor might be kept employed. Yet business men felt that their government was not behind them in foreign enterprises. Straight was anxious that the American Asiatic Association should improve public understanding of Far Eastern questions, particularly, at the time, those of a commercial nature. Two other organizations were busying themselves with foreign relations—the American Manufacturers Export Association and the Pan-American Society of the United States, and in May of 1914 they joined with the American Asiatic Association in holding at Washington the First National Foreign Trade Convention. Recognizing the need of a body to work constantly for the development of a sound national policy in support of oversea commerce, the Convention created the National Foreign Trade Council, of which James A. Farrell, President of the United States Steel Corporation was, and is, the chairman, and in which Straight was indefatigable until he went to the war. The Council achieved an influential position. Its annual conventions have become great business congresses.

Straight was well aware that America could never hope to make her influence felt abroad unless she developed a body of men trained in foreign affairs. And under the term "foreign affairs" he included both government and trade.

"Of course, as long as we ourselves are so young," he wrote to one of his closest college friends, who had become a teacher, "there are great chances at home, and the best element do not go abroad. There is perhaps no appeal to them in the idea of creating a foreign trade, working abroad when they can get almost the same pay at home. Along with this attitude is a general ignorance of things foreign.

"Read the history of our diplomatic relations, which is full of inconsistencies, where we have demanded full recognition not only of our rights but of our privileges, and failed to accord just compensation to those whom we ourselves had injured or imposed upon. Time and again we have demanded our share in the international pie and refused or failed to furnish the fuel for cooking it or to assume any responsibility for its proper digestion.

"This all sounds very pessimistic. I am not a pessimist, however, but the contrary; I believe that we can overcome these faults if they be but recognized and dealt with as they should be. If we want to eradicate the evil we must start far back and train the boys, prepare them to go into the fight with their ideals clearly before them. Then we can hope for better results. The trouble with many, it seems to me, is that, though their ideals may be right, they are not applied, and the tendency is in each separate endeavor to secure success at all costs.

"And it's just here that you come in. I believe that you, and others like you, can turn out the sort of men we need, who will help the country abroad. And I can't help feeling that after all perhaps your work lies there rather than in politics.

"I want you to know that I shall be willing when the time comes to do my part also. I don't know that it would lie in teaching, for I am not a scholar, as Morse told me. For the present at least we do not need to create interests abroad so much as we need to play a con-

SOME MEN OF EAST ASIA: From the Original Water-Colors by Willard Straight

Back of the Buddhist priest of China lie an unplumbed depth of tradition and superstition and strange heights of philosophic contemplation. Although today his garments are somewhat stained and travel worn, the past, with its vast accumulation of thought, still seems to lift him above the trivial concerns of the present, and to impose upon him the dignity of priestly office. It was in the fourth and fifth centuries that Buddhism as a religion spread throughout China, influencing the moods of all men from the Emperors and statesmen down to the most miserable coolie. The great masterpieces of the T'ang and Sung dynasties reflect the philosophic spirit of the age—the conviction that fame is but a treacherous heritage and glory a transient nothingness, and that only in some mountain hermitage far from the world of men are peace and wisdom to be found.

The mule driver, with his padded blue coat and heavy cloth-soled shoes, is, first, last and always, an invetcrate gossip. He is the newspaper of China. Make an excursion into the country as a recreation some pleasant spring day. You hire a jaunty little Peking cart, with a blue cloth awning and two little black gauze windows in the sides, through which you may peer on the outer world. Just in front of the heavy studded wheels, almost on the shafts, squats the muleteer, urging on the donkey with shrill imprecations. Whenever you pass a vehicle on the road, he draws up to exchange gossip, or at least calls over his shoulder to ask and give answer to the inevitable question: Where are you going, and what are you going to do when you get there? His one interest in life is to find out the business of other people, and in this he succeeds admirably.

servative hand until we have the men to direct and further these interests once they are established."

Absorption in these problems led to the founding of the institution that remains, in the mind of down-town New York, the outstanding monument to Willard Straight —India House.

On one occasion he made a visit to Salem, Massachusetts, where some of his ancestors had lived, and while there he went to see the famous East India Marine Hall, a relic of the bygone glories of the port of Salem. He looked at the treasures that had been brought from every quarter of the globe and read of the triumphs of American ships and American seamen. Then there took definite shape in his mind an idea that had been dimly hovering there—that there should be in New York an agreeable gathering-place especially for Americans interested in foreign trade, in an environment suggestive of American enterprise upon and beyond the seas.

Mr. Farrell, who has been pronounced the foremost merchant of the United States and who comes of seafaring forebears, was the man who received the suggestion with most enthusiasm and assurance of support, and Straight broached it before a company gathered from those who had attended the National Foreign Trade Convention in Washington. The idea instantly "took". It was agreed that it ought to be carried out.

"Very well," said Straight. "The building is leased. The alterations are in progress. It remains only for us to organize the club."

With but few confidants, and these the right ones, Straight had gone ahead. He had procured an old three-story building facing Hanover Square, which had been for a generation the head office of W. R. Grace & Co., and which was even then being stripped of its mid-century commonplaceness. Architects in sympathy with the artistic side of Straight's nature were creating an early American atmosphere of wide doorways, black and white marble flooring, colonial blue carpets and draperies and buff walls hung with old shipping prints. Later an exceptional collection of models and paintings of American clipper-ships and, even more rare, prints of early American steamships was added. Among the clippers are the famous *Dreadnought*, the *Ocean Express*, the *Flying Cloud*, and the steamers include Russell and Company's vessels, which long ago navigated Chinese rivers under the American flag, and the early liners of the Pacific Mail. The collection of the Asiatic Institute found a home in India House.

The comforts of the club are modern, but its atmosphere is that of the day, three score years ago and more, when merchant princes sent their sailing-vessels forth, prayed for favorable winds and then gathered to compare notes upon the success of their prayers. Only one name for the club was proposed. "India House" was deemed appropriate not only because it recalled the days when every port had its "India Wharf" or "India Street", but because, at the moment when the thought of the nation was swinging again to foreign commerce, there was rich suggestiveness in the recollection that once "the Indies" was the generic term for the objective of venturesome marine enterprise. The New York India House, unlike the ancient East India House in London, made famous by Charles Lamb, has, in truth, as is natural enough, considering that India is a British colony, less connection with India than with the rest of Asia.

The club was organized in the early days of the war, when men were more disposed to resign from clubs than to join them. The foreign commerce that it was the announced purpose of the club to encourage was stagnant. But so fired with zeal for the idea was the little group, which, besides Straight and Mr. Farrell, included John Foord, E. A. S. Clarke, Joshua A. Hatfield, P. A. S. Franklin and James R. Morse, that, once the doors were opened and merchants, bankers, ship-owners and the many others whose activities touched the sea found that the foreign-flavored cuisine matched the artistic atmosphere, a long waiting list was created. India House immediately became an institution.

There hangs in India House a quaint bronze plaque, the memorial to Willard Straight of a little group of war correspondents who were thrown together at Ping Yang in Korea during the Russo-Japanese War. The Ping Yannigans, they called themselves. Their appreciation graven on this plaque was reminiscent of the days of Straight's singing from Kipling:

"So write, before I die, ' 'E liked it all!' "

Straight's work was not confined to the financial district. He became interested immediately in politics and civics. A Republican by tradition, but temperamentally progressive, he embraced the insurgent movement of 1912. He had long been a friend and admirer of Roosevelt, and now he proclaimed fervently his support of the Colonel for President. This was not a popular stand in the Wall Street of that period. for Roosevelt was regarded by the banking community as a "dangerous man", and many of Straight's closest friends and associates frowned upon his championship of the Progressive Party. In 1916 he was a member of the Committee of One Hundred to Support the Mayor, which was instrumental in the reëlection of John Purroy Mitchel as mayor of New York City. Straight had become one of Mitchel's intimates. The two had much in common—young, enthusiastic, alive with energy and high spirits. The Mayor came to look upon Straight as one of his most dependable co-workers and drew him into service upon several of the citizens' committees that contributed much to the success of the Mitchel administration.

When the great war broke out in 1914, Straight was still with J. P. Morgan and Company. Every other project yielded then to the pressure of new financial problems. A broad imagination and astuteness of the highest order were required to lay out the course upon which J. P. Morgan and Company were soon to embark. Straight, who went to Europe with Henry P. Davison to confer with the British and French officials and bankers, had prepared a memorandum that initiated the idea through which the firm became purchasing agents for the Allies. This was a magnificent coup and gave the Morgans an unequaled prestige in the realm of war financing.

Straight was one of the company of Americans, of which Theodore Roosevelt and Leonard Wood were the leading spokesmen, who believed passionately in military preparedness as a national duty. He was one of the original Plattsburgers of 1915. Together with many of his friends, including Mayor Mitchel, he spent the month of August at the camp. In the year and a half that followed he never relaxed his efforts in behalf of preparedness. Appointed chairman of the Mayor's Committee on National Defense, he directed investigations into the military status of the country and used the

resulting data as the basis of a vigorous educational campaign. The Mexican disturbance of 1916 gave him a peculiarly favorable opportunity. He prepared, in collaboration with his associates, a report entitled *The Mobilization of the National Guard, 1916*, which contained information, disclosing our military unpreparedness, such as had never before been published. It concluded with a recommendation for universal military training and it attracted wide-spread attention.

PEASANT TYPES FROM A BRETON VILLAGE

Straight was absorbed in the problem of the direction of education to the cultivation of better citizenship and Herbert Croly was invited to make a survey. Out of this evolved the founding of *The New Republic* by Straight and Mrs. Straight, in 1914, with Herbert Croly as editor. It was to be the instrument for expression of liberal opinion and for education in public affairs.

Straight did the unique thing in journalism in undertaking to finance the paper while giving an absolutely free hand to its editorial staff. It expressed the true liberality of his mind—free from dogmatism and bias—for frequently, as when he vigorously supported Hughes while *The New Republic* was backing Wilson, he was in direct disagreement with the policy of the paper.

He was keenly interested in journalism and two years later founded ASIA with his eye on an unoccupied journalistic field, which, before many years, would arrest the attention of the country. He undertook to finance the entire cost of developing the Journal of the American Asiatic Association into an authoritative popular illustrated magazine for interpreting the East to Americans. Again he gave the same freedom of editorial direction. Just as the United States entered the war, he was interesting himself in the daily newspaper field.

The mere laying of plans, however, the serving as stimulator of other folk, did not meet the needs of Straight's nature. He required action. From the day the United States had been taken out of the six-Power loan he had been vaguely dissatisfied with his work. His personal relations with J. P. Morgan and Company were all that could be wished. But he felt that he had no definitely important function to perform. So, in 1915, he resigned. He had made up his mind to study international law and had entered into a partnership relation with J. Reuben Clark, Jr., international lawyer, formerly the solicitor of the State Department in the secretaryships of Root, Knox and others. Straight entered the School of Law, Columbia University. Soon thereafter, the opportunity for which he had been waiting came. With Frank A. Vanderlip of the National City Bank as the moving spirit, the American International Corporation was formed, and a vice-presidency was offered to Straight. He accepted. After the abandonment of American participation in the six-Power loan, he had drawn up a plan for just this sort of thing and presented it to his firm. But the time had not then been deemed right and the idea was not taken up. The A. I. C., as it came to be called, was designed as a vehicle for American entrance into foreign development in engineering, railroad and large industrial projects and in public finance.

SUNDAY MORNING IN BRITTANY

In connection with Straight's work with the A. I. C., it becomes pertinent to point out the modification of his previous attitude toward Japan. Since the last winter spent in Peking he had been conscious of a gradual change in his conception of Japan's position in the East. Always his sympathies were profoundly with the Chinese as a people. He resented Japanese aggrandizement at the expense of China. He came, however, to appreciate more clearly the difficult position of the Island Empire with its overcrowded population, meager natural resources and abounding, aggressive energy. He was opposed to the imperialistic element, which was then dominant, as it is now; for this element aimed, not merely to find undeveloped areas where Japanese emigrants might settle, but to bring those areas, and even China itself, under the power of Tokyo. But he decided that general development plans, wherein limitations might be imposed on such ambitions, should not be met with extreme hostility. As he looked about the rest of the world and observed the performances of other nations in territorial aggrandizement at the expense of the weak, he inclined to the belief

SHIPS AND SAILORS AND AN OLD WIFE OF ROSCOFF

that Japan ought not to be singled out for the rôle of the ogre.

His fondness for the Chinese people never wavered. But their governing class—its backing and filling, evasions, broken promises, procrastinations and general incompetence stirred in him a growing disgust. This set up, as it were, a counter current of admiration for the brisk and businesslike ways of the Islanders. Even before leaving China he had written to Bland:

"The whole Chinese situation seems to promise but little for the moribund 'Chin-Ai'. For ffrench's sake, I hope that something may come of it; likewise because I hate to see a thing thus started fall through for such iniquitous causes. But, as for the *beaux yeux des Chinois*, my work is done. I have always advocated altruism, as you know, and that, coupled with a desire to help the helpless—a species of *noblesse oblige*—has spurred me on, despite the many ideals that have been shattered, one by one, as I have dealt more intimately with the mandarin. There may be some of the old feeling left. At present writing, however, I am disgusted with the corruption, stupidity, obstinacy, pusillanimity, trickery and, in short, general impossibility of the whole boiling.

"Although we seem to be nearly at a settlement, the pleasure of the thing is largely lost; for, instead of being able to regard the Currency loan as a great potentiality in effecting the regeneration of this country, one has to regard it as a loan transaction—which may benefit trade, it is true—but which will be of little avail in saving the empire from the pirates, who will secure their ends by force, if indeed they are not spared the trouble by being able to get all they want through the knavery and treachery of Chinese officialdom.

"It's snowing and raining and generally depressing. Is it any wonder then that I've been asking myself, with no answer, 'What's the use, anyway?'"

"He had long fretted," comments Bland, "under the bridle of diplomatic opportunism and polite make-believe, and he therefore hailed with delight the prospect of tackling the problem along new and practical business lines. He had come to perceive, by close contact with the realities of the situation, that something more forcible and direct than good advice was needed if China was to be saved from herself, and in reaching this con-

clusion he had come also, not unnaturally, to regard the activities of the Japanese and the rapidity of their 'peaceful penetration' with unconcealed apprehension. Later he came to realize that the expansion of Japan was a natural and inevitable phenomenon, arising out of causes and forces which were not to be denied by any paper conventions or diplomatic demurrers, and which were by no means to be arrested except by contact with causes and forces of equal elemental strength."

Those "forces of equal elemental strength" were what Straight hoped to see set in motion through such agencies as the A. I. C. He was likewise interested, as a director and prime mover, in the expansion of the Pacific Commerical Company then doing a general trading business with the Philippines—into China. He was actively concerned in land development schemes in Manchuria.

A DEALER IN CURIOS

In the course of his correspondence with Bland, after he had come to live in New York, Straight once wrote, in a satirical, yet half-serious strain: "Don't think that I have become a cynic and that the idealism which was wont to throb through my breast has been stifled by the money-governed atmosphere of Wall Street. Far from it! I still claim to be a forward-looking man, as President Wilson puts it. My hopes are high, my purpose pure, my aspirations hitched to the proverbial star, while my poetic soul finds the world frequently out of tune. Experience has taught me, however, that it is well to be content with the little things and to endeavor to accomplish bit by bit rather than to clamor for an immediate millennium."

He had not lost faith in the principles of the big idea exemplified in the six-Power loan, but the "experience" he referred to had taught him that it was hopeless to count upon working out these principles during the next four years at least. His plan for accomplishing "bit by bit" was to begin from the other end: namely, the construction of an actual project, a railroad, for instance. Out of this, the principles would evolve.

When Carey of Siems-Carey Railway and Canal Company brought from China assurances of contracts for American railroad building and the rehabilitation of the Grand Canal, Straight was keen for putting them through as American enterprises. When the Japanese objected to Americans operating in Shantung and other Powers in other parts of China Straight backed the idea of partnership with the Japanese in order to get a big piece of development work on its way. He was convinced that acceptance of the only practical opportunity open for bringing American capital into active operation in China was a step toward the accomplishment of his ambition for complete international coöperation in China.

This partnership with the Japanese brought down upon Straight considerable criticism from some of his acquaintances, who declared that he ought not thus to be dealing with the enemy of China. He did not agree. He had by no means accepted the Japanese plan generally believed to have been proposed by Baron Shibusawa, that America furnish the money and Japan the direction of development work in China. He had carefully seen to it that the Japanese, while admitted to partnership, held only a minority share in the project. The Americans held control and American engineers, using Chinese to the largest extent possible, were to do the work. It came to be Straight's belief that, as a matter of international policy, Japan should be taken at her word and admitted to equal partnership in the maintenance of the Open Door. The western Powers would accomplish more for the good of China in that way than by keeping the one great eastern Power in the position of antagonist. Japan would be less dangerous inside than outside the concert of nations. To seek to prohibit her from taking part in developing the continent of Asia was like trying to seal up steam in a pot while the fire was burning underneath. The most practical course, then, was for America to go ahead and herself practise "peaceful penetration": invest her money in railroads and other improvements, send her engineers to devise irrigation and canal and flood-control schemes, install her commercial and trade emissaries in the ports and big inland towns, and withal, to contribute to the upbuilding of China through the ordinary channels of modern enterprise.

But, in this vision there was to be on America's part no political activity of the sort that had marked the Far Eastern rivalry of the European Powers—no reaching out after "spheres of influence". Straight was confident that with the growth of education among the Chinese and the growth of liberal sentiment in other countries it would be possible eventually to convert China from a pirates' picnic-ground into a fair field with no favor. This end was to be reached by a gradual progress. Our entrance into the war and Straight's immediate enlistment cut off his further participation in the working out of the Far Eastern problem. During the war and since the Armistice, many events in the Orient have made the course before the United States much clearer. Straight's foresight has been proved and what he perceived ten years ago is now being recognized by thinking people the country over.

The declaration of war against Germany took Straight from the office of the American International Corporation in the spring of 1917. He was commissioned a major in the Officers Reserve Corps. When Congress passed the law providing for war risk insurance, more than two hundred thousand troops had already gone to

Europe. The insurance was purely voluntary, and an intensive campaign of education and persuasion was required to lay the offer before the men. This was fairly simple in the United States, but difficult in France. Straight was called from Camp Doniphan, Oklahoma, to undertake it. He had been exerting every influence to get to France in any capacity for active service. He sailed for Europe toward the middle of December and arrived on Christmas Day.

Had he followed the methods of Regular Army routine, he would have regulated his movements upon a series of "special orders"— all of them, of course, delayed—and would have been shunted from one headquarters to another through a period of many months. Instead, on his own responsibility, he arranged with the Red Cross office in Paris to lend him fifty Ford cars. He obtained, through a man high in the councils of the A. E. F., a detail of a hundred officers and enlisted men. Then the Fords and their commanders went forth from Paris to the American units scattered all over northern France. In two months the work was cleared up—the American troops were insured. It was a characteristically original piece of work, thoroughly planned and organized and carried through with a whirl that generated enthusiasm as it rolled on. Straight was then free for other assignments. February of 1918 found him in training at the A. E. F. Staff College, Langres. When he had finished the course in May, he was appointed assistant to G-3 (operations) on the Third Corps Staff at Remiremont. There he served under Major-General William M. Wright. These two men, the trained soldier and the neophyte in arms, became close friends. They discussed all manner of things. In General Wright's diary appears an entry for July 4, as follows: "Straight says he will have peace by November 15. I don't know what he bases his ideas on."

Straight applied for an assignment to line duty, and in July he was transferred to the infantry. But his commanding officer, determined not to let him go, had the order changed and held him on the staff. In the latter part of July he was sent to the battle of the Aisne on a special mission as observer. The Third Corps Staff went with General Bullard, but Straight remained with General Wright in the Fifth Corps. When the American First Army was formed in August, he was appointed assistant chief of staff, G-1, First Army, and served in that capacity during most of the Meuse-Argonne campaign. Though unacquainted with military science, he brought an active brain to bear on problems new even to trained men, with the result that, among his reports, one on liaison operations became a standard in use.

MAID IN A JAPANESE INN

In October, when President Wilson dispatched Colonel House to Europe to organize a force to advise and assist the American peace delegates, Colonel House found Straight attached to Marshal Foch's headquarters and immediately enlisted him as one of his helpers.

"While the terms of the Armistice were under consideration," writes Colonel House, "Willard Straight was in almost constant communication with our headquarters in Paris, advising us of the passing of events, as reported by Marshal Foch. He telephoned us of the Armistice fifteen minutes after it was signed, and the news was sent on to the President at Washington over a reserved cable."

At the request of Colonel House, Straight was detailed by General Pershing to assist in the preparations for the Peace Conference in Paris. Upon this rôle, which gave full scope to his talent for organization, he entered with delight. In the days immediately after the signing of the Armistice—before the problems of peace began to weigh and when the losses of the war were forgotten for a little while the world, and especially Paris, was in high spirits. With familiar faces about him, with stimulating work and the prospect of soon returning to home and family, Straight probably had rarely spent a happier fortnight. In the midst of it all he was struck down with bronchial pneumonia. On December 1, 1918, he died at the Hotel Crillon in Paris.

If Straight were living today, the shaping of events in the Orient, the new philosophies and principles of international relations set in motion by the war and the possibilities for applying them concretely, would assuredly have continued him in the public service. He had tried Wall Street and knew all that it meant. It had added greatly to his powers. It had given him discipline that he valued tremendously. It had given him friendships in the Morgan firm and others that were among his finest associations. He looked upon Wall Street, together with his financial experience, with warm appreciation of what it had brought him. But it was not his life. And he left it because his make-up laid his path in other fields.

"For me as for other friends of Willard Straight," writes J. O. P. Bland, "it was a matter for regret when the stars in their courses led him into the fields of high finance. *Quo fata vocant:* to every man his appointed way. But I felt when Wall Street claimed him, that its atmosphere must tend in time to dull the edge of that light-hearted, keen-minded nature and to stifle the aspirations of the artist within him. . . . He gave all his energies to Wall Street as he did to whatever he undertook; but there were often moments, I believe, when the wild hawk

in him longed for the wind-swept sky, when he hated the money-changers and the clamor of the market-place and heard the East a-calling, insidious as of old.

"The Willard that I and others knew, first as a junior in the Chinese Customs Service and then as Reuter's correspondent during the Russo-Japanese War, lingers in one's memory like sunlight on the distant hills. In those days, when all the world lay before his eager feet, full of the prospect of romance and high emprise, when the heyday was in the blood and every turn of the road meant fresh chances of adventure, Straight was an artist, a knight-errant, a Bohemian in the best sense of the word, a Peter-Pan embodiment of light-hearted *joie de vivre*. He had all the artist's susceptibility to environment and atmosphere and introspective melancholy. Beauty of form and color, music and the moving pageant of oriental life were the very breath of his nostrils. The dignified philosophy of the Chinese, their elemental and picturesque simplicity, appealed to him from the first and inspired him with a sympathy which grew as, in later years, he realized their helplessness and the strength of the material forces which were steadily invading their splendid isolation."

THE HOUSEWIFE AND THE CARTER, PEKING

Those who knew what was going on in Straight's inner self in France, saw that the war had brought a resurgence of this old spirit of his first days in China. With it, there was the seasoned experience of nearly a decade of the battle in big affairs he had been through. He had enjoyed this battle. More than that he had won from it the art of translating a vision into terms of practical compromise with the day-to-day necessity of getting results.

Undoubtedly the reconstruction of the State Department with a personnel of men of diplomatic experience, under the new administration, would have carried Straight into the service of this branch of the government. His friend and associate in the beginnings of American concern with Chinese finance, Henry P. Fletcher, is now under-secretary of State. Fred M. Dearing, who succeeded Straight in the American International Corporation, is first assistant secretary. It is unquestionable that Straight's broad knowledge of the field would have been called into use in direct bearing upon the vigorous Far Eastern policy indicated as under way at Washington.

Out of the melting-pot of his experiences in the Far East for a period of nearly twenty years, Straight, if he were alive today, would have derived a Far Eastern creed, his friends believe, involving a full appreciation of Japan's difficulties and a warm sympathy; an intensified hatred of the aggrandizing tactics of the Japanese militarists as their hand revealed itself during the war; and a revivifying of affection for the Chinese, heightened by renewed appreciation of the incapacity and corruption of their government. He would have developed a deepened faith in the spirit of the great oriental peoples and in the regenerative forces at work among them.

In Japan, such are the influences now apparent in the slow growth of a liberal feeling, which will exercise future restraint upon the militarist. In China, salutary impulses are being revealed in the awakening of the Chinese business man to his power for control of the corrupt mandarinate, and in the intellectual renaissance through which students are becoming a force that governments have to reckon with. By these hopeful signs, Straight would be inspired to yet greater confidence in the practical efficacy of the ideal of fair treatment for all, and would today be directing his powers to the application of such plans as the Consortium for speeding the effects of the beneficent forces now operative in the East.

On the day of his death Willard Straight was not yet forty years old. There were intense, spectacular moments in his life's journey, which ended that December day in Paris. But there was plenty of toil along the way. Straight, the eager and romantic, was a plodder and digger whenever there was need, and much of the time there was. Capacity for work and the love of it were the foundation of his success. His philosophy was one of action. He had achieved much and yet he had scarcely begun what undoubtedly would have been a brilliant career. His friends remember him, however, not for what he accomplished or promised to achieve, but for what he was—a man, broad-visioned, warm-hearted and ever young—not for what he got out of life, but for what his generosity and high spirit and charm put into it.

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